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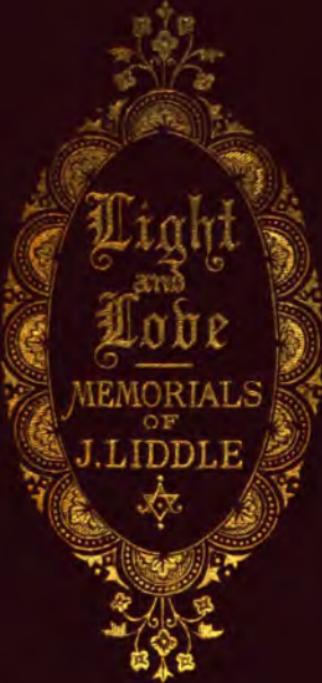
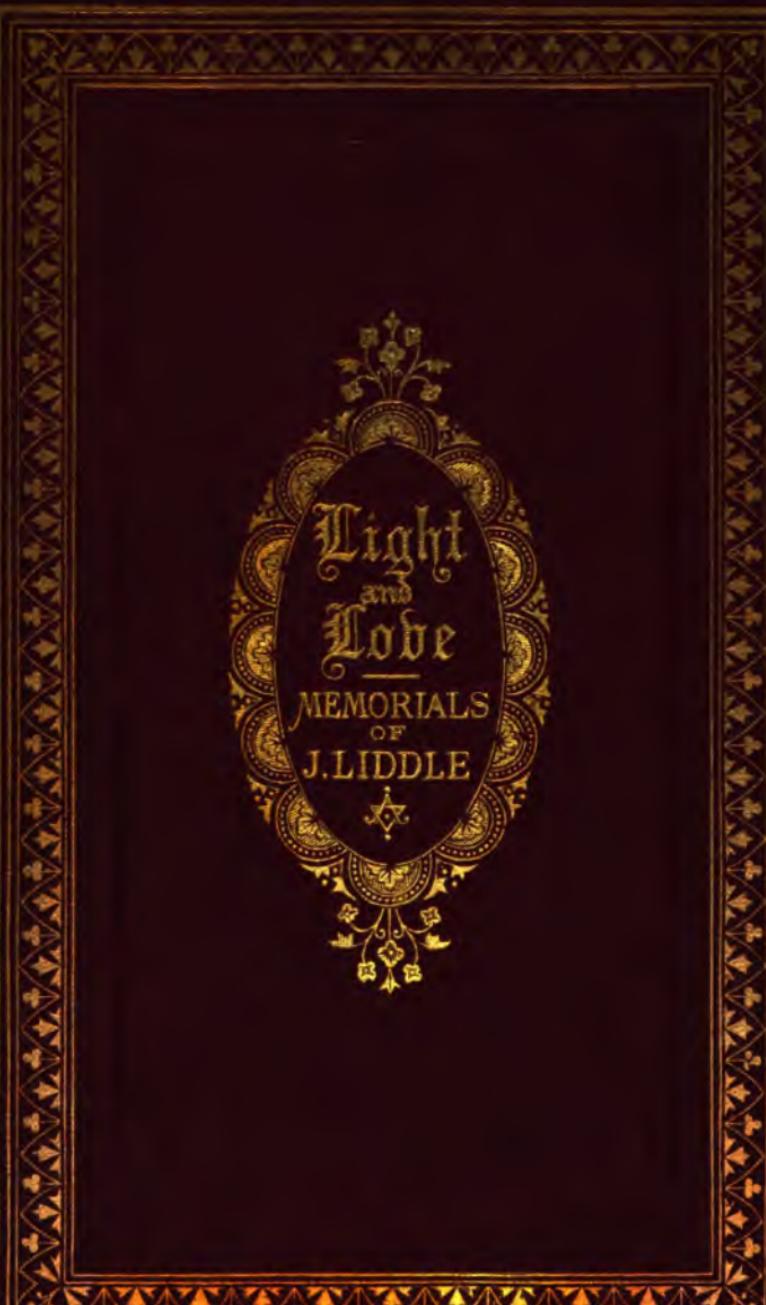
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Light
and
Love
—
MEMORIALS
OF
J. LIDDLE





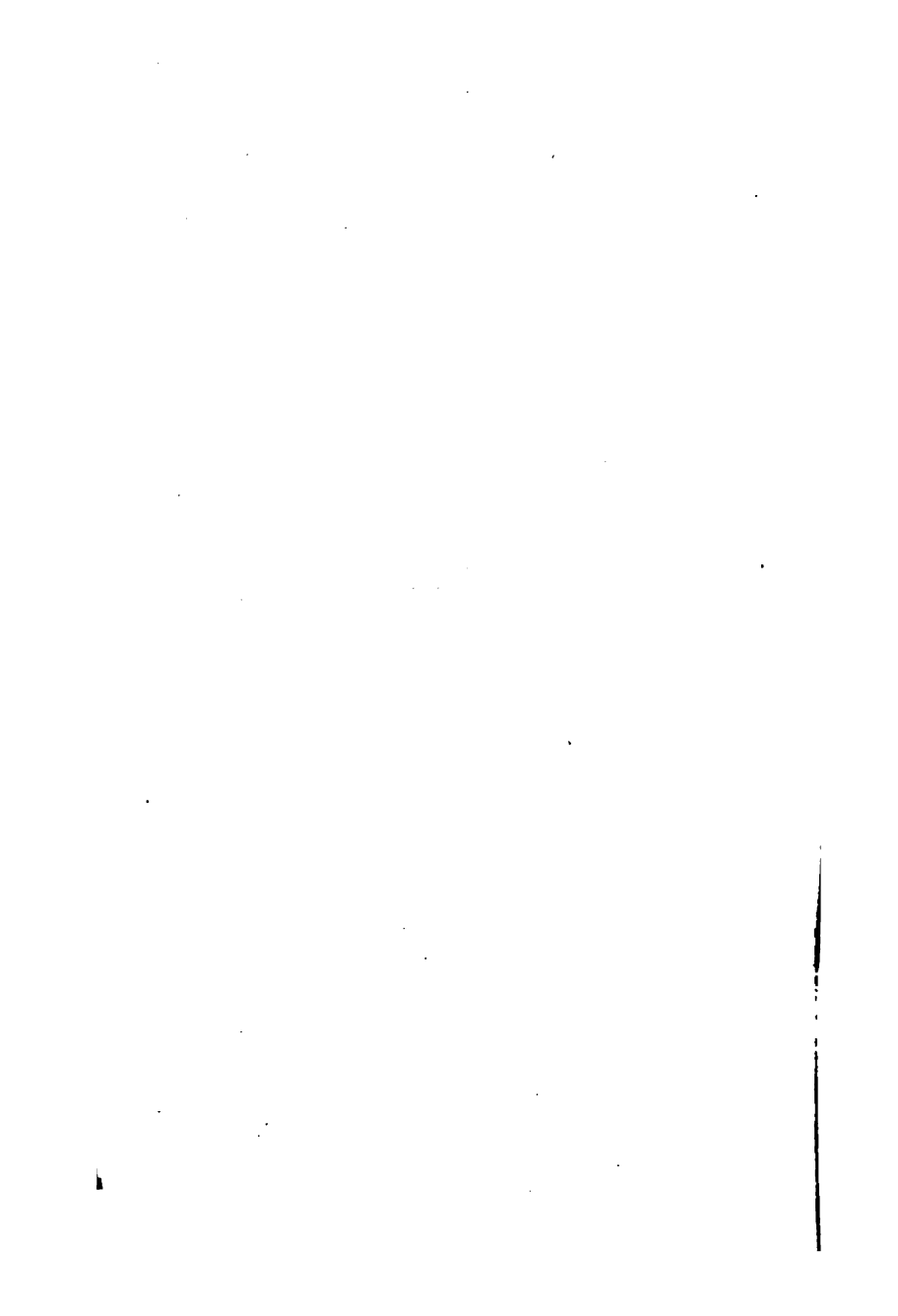
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J. Liddle

LIGHT AND LOVE.







J. Liddle

LIGHT AND LOVE.



Light and Love:

MEMORIALS

OF

JOSIAH LIDDLE,

OF HALIFAX.

PART I.—BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

PART II.—BIBLE-CLASS LESSONS.

THE LATTER INTRODUCED BY

REMARKS ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

BY

JAS. ALEX. MACDONALD.

AUTHOR OF

"THE PRINCIPIA AND THE BIBLE;" "HEAVENWARD;" ETC.



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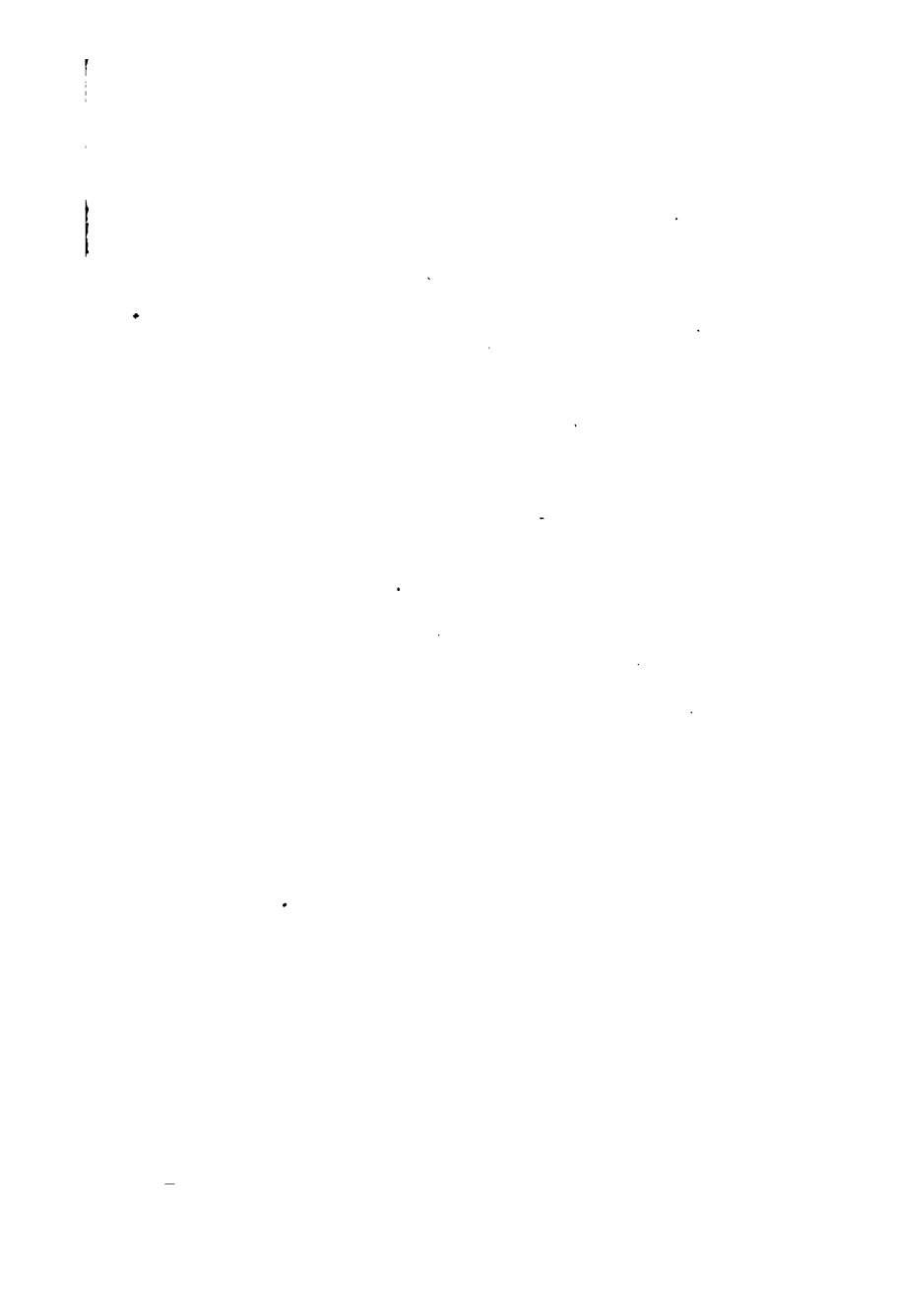
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TO
WILLIAM MEWBURN, Esq.,
OF WYKHAM PARK, OXON.,
THIS VOLUME,
BEING
Memorials
OF AN
EXEMPLARY CHRISTIAN,
WHOM,
BY KINDRED SYMPATHIES,
HE KNEW TO ESTEEM AND LOVE,
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY
DEDICATED.



PREFACE.

~~THE~~ Biographical Sketch of an intelligent, devout, and useful Christian, which forms the first part of this volume, was originally written with reference to a "Funeral Sermon." After it had served that purpose it occurred to me that with additions, and proper modifications, it might find a suitable place in the pages of the "Methodist Magazine." In seeking the material necessary for this, I was led to inquire if, amongst the papers of Mr. Liddle, there were not some Notes which he had prepared for his Bible-class in the Sabbath-school. This inquiry was suggested by a lively recollection I had of the deeply interesting and very masterly manner, in which, once in my presence, he had imparted his lesson, on which occasion I observed that he had a manuscript before him. The Notes of a Series of Lessons

were thus brought to light, which appeared to me so admirable, that I immediately altered my plan and resolved to present the whole to the public in a distinct form. These I have taken the liberty to introduce to the reader with "Remarks on the Management of Sunday-schools," which, I trust, may not be considered out of place.

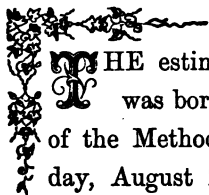
J. A. M.

Part i.

MEMOIR
OF
JOSIAH LIDDLE.

“Not he of wealth immense possess’d,
Tasteless who piles his massy gold,
Among the number of the blest
Should have his glorious name enroll’d :
He better claims the glorious name, who knows
With wisdom to enjoy what Heaven bestows :
Who knows the wrongs of want to bear
E’en in its lowest, last extreme ;
Yet can with conscious virtue fear,
Far worse than death, a deed of shame.”

M E M O I R .



THE estimable subject of this Memoir was born at Leeds, during an assembly of the Methodist Conference there, on Sunday, August 2nd, 1818.

His father was a person of superior understanding and extensive reading; and, particularly towards the close of his life, became intensely zealous for the glory of God, and conducted no less than six Society Classes. His mother was a lady of exemplary piety and for many years, also, was a Leader. Her enlightened desires for the spiritual welfare of her children, prompted her to improve every occasion to press the Divine claims upon the homage of their hearts. And, in pursuance of this purpose, she adopted the excellent practice of leading them frequently into the retirement of her closet to converse

closely and affectionately, and to pray, with them. The earnestness with which, on those occasions, she would sometimes beseech the Lord to prepare them for Himself and speedily remove them to heaven, rather than they should live to be wicked, naturally made a deep and lasting impression upon their minds.

Fostered by such parents we are not surprised to learn that, from his early youth, Josiah Liddle should have been the subject of religious convictions and desires. The soil of his soul was carefully prepared for the reception and nourishment of the seed of the kingdom. Meanwhile every attention was given to lay the foundations of liberal education from which he derived considerable advantage in subsequent years. At the age of fifteen, in the old Methodist Chapel of his native town—a place of glorious memories, he surrendered to Christ; and the momentous event upon which hinged the destinies of eternity was immediately recorded by his own hand in the following expressive terms:—

‘Monday, 16th Sept., 1833.—I have reason to bless God for His pardoning love to sinners.

This night He has set my soul at liberty. (Mr. Aitkin preached.) O may I be kept from sin 'till He cometh to judge the world; and then may I be found in peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The suddenness of this change was soon made an occasion of temptation and of painful doubt lest his faith was not of the true type; but recourse to prayer dispersed the clouds, and summer again settled upon his soul. After three days of unusual joy he writes :—

"*Friday, 20th.*—I feel a strange gloom over my mind. I fear I shall never make anything out in religion; but I trust the Lord will deliver me."

"*Saturday, 21st.*—I still feel unhappy. O that the Lord would shed His pardoning love abroad in my heart."

"*Sunday, 22nd.*—This morning, at family prayer, the Lord shone in upon me and dispersed the gloom that hung over my soul. I feel that I can now praise Him."

Such exercises are by no means unusual, especially with spirits recently liberated from the yoke of sin, and to such, this artless record

of experience cannot fail to be edifying ; but when the desires of the spirit are true, though darkness may endure for the night, joy will inevitably break in the morning.

Sensible of his need of Christian sympathy and encouragement, he wisely delayed not to identify himself with the people of God ; and he continued to meet in the class conducted by Mr. Barlow, while he remained in Leeds. These eminently useful means of grace he greatly valued, and found exceedingly helpful to his spiritual growth.

A fortnight after the date of his conversion, he attended a Lovefeast, and expresses the benefit he derived, in these words :—

“Sunday, 29th.—I feel this day to be a refreshing one to my soul. The Lovefeast this afternoon was a delightful time. O that I may follow the Lord more fully.”

The faithful records, subjoined, of the heart-exercises of a young disciple of transparent simplicity and sincerity, are exceedingly interesting :—

“Sunday, Oct. 6th.—This day is a blessed season of refreshing from the Lord. O that

I may live more and more to His service! I feel were I to die just now I should go to heaven."

"*Monday, 7th.*—I have not been watchful enough. I have fallen into a sin. The devil has tempted me that my faith is all nonsense. I am fit to despair; but I trust that the Lord will forgive me."

"*Tuesday, 8th.*—This morning the Lord has again shone upon my mind; but such angry tempers and such levity of mind do arise that I am continually offending God. O that He would shed His love abroad in my heart!"

"*Sunday, 20th.*—I feel this day to be a blessed one to my soul. O that God would make me more and more like Himself! Jesus, pour down the Spirit into my heart. Help me, Lord, to go on unto perfection. Keep me in thy love. May I in thine arms expire. This I beg for Christ's sake. Amen."

"*Monday, 21st.*—The Lord still blesses my soul. Glory be to God I have a hope beyond the grave! O may the Lord keep me by His power, for Christ's sake. Amen."

"*Tuesday, 22nd.*—I have such a load upon

my mind because I do not know what to say at Class-meeting. O that the Lord would take the load away and reveal Himself to me."

"*Wednesday, 23rd.*—This load is not entirely taken away, but, glory be to God! He has removed a little. I feel I have a joyful hope of immortality. May the Lord ever keep me, for Christ's sake."

Such artless expressions must needs be encouraging to young disciples who are passing through similar experiences. The earlier stages of the religious life are particularly characterized by fits of elation and depression, in keeping with the proverbial impulsiveness of youth. Now the spirit is jubilant, and pluming his wing to tower into heaven; the very next day he is almost persuaded that "his faith is all nonsense;" then follows deep contrition for unbelief and irritable temper; then the blaze of a heavenly sunshine. But amidst all the soul's education advances. Self dependence is shaken; God becomes increasingly the confidence of the spirit, and the hungering and thirsting after righteousness—the desire for a clean heart, becomes insatiable.

In the year 1834 Josiah Liddle left the parental home and removed to Halifax where he was apprenticed to a Draper. Being in earnest in the service of God, and fully sensible of the value of the Class-meeting as a means of promoting the religious life, he lost no time in seeking the communion of the saints. Thus he was preserved from the snares into which young Christians too often are drawn, who, in the periods of transition, stand aloof from the fellowship of the good, and in consequence suffer the shipwreck of faith, hope and happiness. And he further evinced the vitality of his religion in zeal and activity in the service of the Church.

In the month of May in this year, he became a Teacher in a Sabbath-school opened at Booth Town,—a village distant about a mile from Halifax; at that time principally worked by an agency supplied from the town. In this field of labour his assiduity was untiring. Meanwhile, as might be expected, the work of grace deepened in his soul. This is evident from the remaining entries in his memorandum book, and from his correspondence

with a beloved sister travelling with him in the heavenly way :—

“*Sunday, July 13th.*—I feel this day (viz., the Sabbath, in whose sacred hours he ever felt a peculiar joy,) to be more and more precious to my soul. O what a delightful week I have had ! I feel my Class-meetings to be indeed refreshing times from the presence of the Lord. O what a hungering and thirsting after righteousness I experience ! May the Lord enable me to obtain entire sanctification and devotedness to Him for His name’s sake. Amen.”

Writing to his sister soon after he says :—

“I believe we are about to have a revival here. I often wish I had nothing else to do but sing the praises of God. Glory ! glory ! hallelujah ! I delight to be in the prayer-meetings !

“I anxiously look forward to the time when, if God permit, I shall meet you under the roof of my *sweet, sweet* home.

“For my own part I see nothing wherein to trust but the merits of my dear Redeemer ; and trusting in His merits I am enabled to

rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

His remaining private memoranda respecting his religious life occur at septenary intervals, and conclude before the close of the year 1834. They proceed thus :—

"*Sunday, Oct. 26th.*—I feel this day to be precious to my soul. I went this morning to Class-meeting (the time of meeting was the wholesome hour of seven, winter and summer,) rather cast down; but before the close the cloud was entirely removed, and I returned rejoicing in God my Saviour. O that the Lord would root all sin out of my heart and make me more like Himself, for His name's sake!"

"*Sunday, Nov. 23rd.*—I feel this day much blessed. I feel that I have made some little progress; but I want to be more conformed to the image of God. I want that mind which was in Christ Jesus. I want nothing but the perfect love of God to dwell in my soul. O that the Lord would sanctify me wholly through body, soul, and spirit, for His mercy's sake. Amen."

"Sunday, Nov. 30th.—This day I feel much humbled on account of my unfaithfulness ; still I feel there is efficacy in the blood of Christ for the forgiveness of all my sins. I want a deeper and more entire devotedness to Him. O that He would 'increase my faith, confirm my hope, and perfect me in love,' for His name's sake."

In the same strain he continues the correspondence with his sister. In a letter dated February, 1835, he says :—

"I would not part with the little religion I have for thousands of gold and silver ;—the faintest hope of heaven for ten thousand worlds."

Again, July 14th of the same year :—

"I want my heart cleansing entirely from inward depravity. O may the Lord sanctify me and make me thus meet for the Master's service, for Christ's sake."

On the 28th of July :—

"I sincerely hope you can lay your hand on your heart and say with the Apostle that, 'Being justified by faith you have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' My dear

sister, I can say, I believe with the utmost confidence at this moment, this is my blessed experience. O may the Lord enable me to hold it fast unto the end; for it is only 'he that endureth to the end' that 'shall be saved.' The way of justification, by faith, is so plain and easy that a way-faring man need not err."

Such soul-searching and devout aspirations are usually precursors of extended usefulness. God honours those who honour Him. Devotional instincts, doubtless, prompted Moses to lead the flock of Jethro in the direction of "the mountain of God,"—a place which appears to have had its name as being the site of one of those vegetable temples of Patriarchal times, preserving the memory of Eden—the first dwelling-place of wisdom in the habitable parts of the earth: and there he received his high commission to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt. In connection with a magnificent vision of the glory of God, by which he became tremblingly alive to personal and relative depravity, and after experiencing the purifying virtue of the living fire from the altar of burnt offerings, Isaiah's ear was ren-

dered sensitive to Divine voices and his heart prepared to execute the will of God. The disciples of Jesus were qualified for the fulfilment of their high commission as the evangelists of humanity by the deep heart-searchings excited by the horrors of Calvary, by the suspense of the period between the death of their Master and the day of Pentecost, and by the Royal baptism of that auspicious day. And there is remarkable significance in the expressions of Luke in reference to the achievements of one of the sons of thunder at Antioch: "Barnabas was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord." The faith of good men rouses the thunder that batters the ramparts of hell.

After exercising his talents as a Sunday-school Teacher for nearly two years with great diligence and acceptance, an additional field of holy labour opened to our friend, to which he thus refers in a communication to his sister dated Jan. 14th, '1836.

"Since I wrote last the Lord has called

me to work in His vineyard. The Monday before Christmas-day the Prayer-leaders were to meet to renew their Plans. One of the number said to me, before going there, that I ought to be proposed to be put on the Plan. I told him I would rather be excused as I felt I ought to be in a healthier state of religious experience before my name appeared there. During the week I prayed that if the Lord saw it would be for His glory and the good of my soul, He would let me be placed on the plan; but if not, that He would never suffer it to be so. The "Service for the Renewing of the Covenant" was appointed for the afternoon of the first Sabbath of the new year, and a blessed season it was. I do not know when I felt such a good time. I believe there was not one present but felt much blessed. For my own part it was a season of great spiritual good. I determined there and then to take Christ, His yoke, His cross, His sufferings and His crown—to take Him for better for worse, for richer for poorer. I determined that whatever He appointed me to do that would I

do, only that He would make me a vessel of honour fit for the Master's use. I felt such a falling into the will of God as I never experienced before. I felt determined to be His on His own terms, for Him to appoint me whatever work He pleased. That very night my friend came to me and said, 'Josiah, you must attend to your appointment.' I wanted to know 'What appointment?' He then told me that my name was on the Prayer-leaders' Plan. I felt much surprised; but fully convinced that it was the appointment of God. I have since punctually attended, and each time felt richly blessed. May the Lord give me grace to fulfil all the good pleasure of His will."

This is manifestly the right spirit in which to enter upon the work of the Lord; and where such a disposition exists the tokens of the Divine approval will not be wanting. Many, doubtless, were the seasons fruitful in blessing which our dear friend experienced in his new engagement in the service of the Church. He has left one interesting record which, from the manner of its introduction,

implies that it was by no means a solitary case. On the 10th of March, 1837, he writes :—

“Last Wednesday night, at the Prayer-meeting, while I was talking with the Penitents, I think I shall never forget how I felt my soul to burn with the love of God. I felt that if I had a thousand souls to save I would trust them all with that Saviour who died for me.

‘Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.’

“So long as we remain in this probationary state, exposed to the temptations of the adversary, occasional questions respecting the stability of the foundations upon which we rest our heavenly hopes, will transiently trouble the mind. It is important, therefore, that we should well consider the great argument for the truth of the Christian religion as presented in such works as Horne’s Introduction, Watson’s Institutes, and other standard treatises. But there is nothing like the experimental evidence to those who come fully under its power.

“What we have heard and seen
 With confidence we tell ;
 And publish to the Sons of men,
 The signs infallible.”

“That which was from the beginning,” says the Apostle John, “which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life ; (for the Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that Eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us : and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.” And our Lord has said, “If any man shall do My will he shall know of the doctrine.” To a soul alive to God this Supernatural Witness is ever at hand, and proves an argument as conclusive as it is concise.

Mr. Liddle was no stranger to the usual rational evidences of Christianity when, on the 5th of July, 1837, he wrote, “I am building on the foundation of the Apostles and

Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Corner Stone;" but the experimental assurance was that on which he instantly relied in the hour of temptation, as he added; "and though lately I have been tempted to disbelieve the truth of Christianity and authenticity of the Bible, I FEEL that my feet are placed on the Rock, Christ Jesus, and I am determined here to abide 'mid all the storms and commotions of life."

After laboring at Booth Town for four years, he connected himself with the School belonging to Wesley Chapel, Halifax. In a letter to his sister, dated Jan. 12th, 1838, he refers to this transfer of his services in the following words:—

"I intend, if all be well, taking my seat next Sunday afternoon, as a Teacher, in Wesley School Room. All this week I have been studying the best method of imparting religious instruction?"

This sentence is highly characteristic. Few persons were more profoundly convinced than he of the grand fact that emphatically "*religious instruction*" is precisely the kind of instruction

proper to the Sabbath-school. He was also deeply convinced of the importance of a careful previous preparation in order, in the most efficient manner, to impart that instruction. The number of the periodicals and other works bearing upon the Bible-geography, history, oriental usages, and whatever he could press into the service, of illustrating the meaning of the Scriptures, which he purchased and read, testified to this. And the excellent use which he made of these aids will be sufficiently evident in the admirable Bible-class Lessons collected in this volume. I had the pleasure of being present on one occasion while he conducted his Class, and was exceedingly delighted, not only with the deeply interesting and masterly manner in which he imparted the Lesson; but particularly with the intense earnestness and pure spirituality which pervaded it, and the directness, closeness, and constancy of the appeals to the conscience and the heart.

The progress of his correspondence with his sister continues to reveal the ever-increasing

richness and maturity of his religious experience. To evince this we shall quote a series of extracts in the order of their dates, as though they had formed a portion of a Diary.

"March 6th, 1838.—My path lately has been so hidden amongst clouds and darkness, that I may say with the apostle Paul, 'for many days neither sun, moon, nor stars, have appeared.'"

"April 2nd.—I have more pleasing intelligence for you than when I wrote last. I bless God the clouds and darkness have passed away and now the bright light shines. I can say :—

'Not a cloud doth arise to darken the skies,
Or hide for one moment my Lord from my eyes.'

I feel now that Christ is the supreme object of my affections. I love Him because He first loved me. I can lay my hand on my heart and say,

'No condemnation now I dread,
Jesus, and all in Him, are Mine !
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, thro' Christ, my own.'

I felt such a sweet union with Christ my Redeemer last night, while partaking of the hallowed memorials of His dying love, as I think I never felt before. O may I constantly cleave close to His bleeding side! May I be united to Him as the branch is united to the vine. I shall ever feel strong attachment to Leeds as my spiritual birth-place, and likewise to Halifax, as the place where I have been more firmly established and grounded in the faith,—where I have been led from my infancy up to youth. O may I continue to grow in grace and in the knowledge of my Lord and Saviour."

"*Sept. 3rd.*—I have enjoyed many solemn and delightful seasons at the Sacrament; but I think I never was at one which equalled that of last night. While partaking of the hallowed memorials of my Saviour's dying love, the determination of my soul was:—

'Forever here my rest shall be
Close to thy bleeding side;
This all my hope and all my plea,
For me the Saviour died!'

While the language of my heart was :—

‘ Wash me, and make me thus thine own,
 Wash me and mine thou art,
 Wash me, but not my feet alone,
 My hands, my head, my heart.’ ”

The year 1840, is memorable in the Methodism of Halifax, for the formation of what is still called The “Juvenile” Missionary Society. At six o'clock in the morning of Wednesday, June 3rd, in that year, a number of young men met in the Vestry of Wesley Chapel, under the Presidency of the much loved and now venerable Rev. Joseph Roberts, at that time Superintendent of the Circuit, when the following Resolutions were drawn up, and unanimously adopted. 1st. “That this meeting deeply impressed with the Spiritual destitution of a vast proportion of the human race, and believing it to be the duty of every follower of the Lord Jesus Christ to use his utmost endeavours to promote the universal spread of the Redeemer's Kingdom, considers it necessary that under the existing state of the Funds of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, further exertions should be made in order to the efficient

maintenance of the various Missions at present in operation, and to the extension of the work into those deeply interesting and important fields of usefulness which have been recently, so providentially opened." 2nd. "That a Society be formed to be denominated, 'THE HALIFAX JUVENILE WESLEYAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY,' having for its object the promotion of a deeper interest in the cause of Missions, among the junior members of the Methodist Society, and the obtaining of increased Funds towards sending the Gospel to every nation under heaven." Again at six o'clock in the morning, on the Wednesday following, under the same presidency, the young men met and formed themselves into a committee, and, amongst the names of Mewburn, Towers, Jepson, Dyer, Edmunds, and others, as might be expected from the temper of his Christian spirit, we find also the name LIDDLE. We shall again have occasion to refer to this excellent Society, and therefore, shall only mention here that the pecuniary result of the first year of its existence, was the sum of £67 18s., placed in the hands of the Treasurers

of the Missions,—a sum which, in subsequent years, has been considerably more than trebled.

The maturing of his religious character was not only felt by Mr. Liddle himself, but was also manifested to those with whom he was associated in the Church. He was accordingly placed at the head of a band of Prayer-leaders, on the Plan of their work issued in the February of 1842. In this capacity he had opportunities of occasionally offering a word of exhortation to the congregations collected in the cottages. And as it was a maxim with him that whatever was worth doing was worth doing thoroughly, these exhortations were not the mere random thoughts of the moment, but the results of careful preparation. It is to be regretted that only one specimen of these compositions can be found amongst his papers, which, though incomplete, is yet so excellent, that its introduction here will need no apology.

EXHORTATION

ON THE WORDS OF OUR LORD.

"WATCH THEREFORE, FOR YE KNOW NEITHER THE DAY NOR THE HOUR WHEREIN THE SON OF MAN COMETH."—*Matt. xxv. 13.*

WE are not to suppose, when our Lord uttered these words of admonition, that He meant to direct the attention of the disciples to that period of time when He should come with ten thousand of His saints to execute judgment upon the wicked. He who is acquainted with all things,—past, present, and future, knew full well that many ages should intervene,—that empires should rise and fall, that kingdoms should be subverted and established, and that the affairs of the earth should experience many great and extraordinary changes before that period arrived, when He should be seated upon the throne of His glory, and all nations should be gathered before Him. In addressing these words to His disciples therefore, our Lord plainly had reference to

a period close at hand to every human being, intimately related, however, to the Judgment Day. When the Lord Jesus shall come in the clouds of heaven, and the thrones shall be set, and the books opened, and all mankind shall stand before the Judge, then mills, and factories, counting houses and shops, offices and places of exchange, ships of merchandise and ships of war, armies and officers of state, cities and towns, villages and hamlets, will all have passed away. They will have answered their ends. And when an individual dies, though these things still remain, yet to him they are as though they were not—upon the disembodied spirit they cease to exert any influence—they are as though they were destroyed. Ah! the moment the soul leaves the body, how different are its views and thoughts respecting the affairs and pursuits of the busy tribes of flesh and blood!

Again, when Christ shall come in the glory of His Father, then the wealth of the merchant shall have ceased, the profits of the tradesman shall have vanished, crowns and sceptres, thrones and kingdoms, all the hon-

ors and splendours of this vain world shall be no more. And when an individual dies, can he take any of his possessions with him? He may have heaped together riches; but can he take his gold and silver with him? Ah, no! when a man dies he finds himself suddenly deprived of every thing which he had contrived and laboured to attain. He brought nothing into this world, and he can carry nothing out.

Furthermore, at the end of the world, when Christ shall come to judgment, He will fix unalterably the eternal state of every human being. He will be seated, not on a throne of mercy but of judgment. There will then be no places of public worship—no houses of prayer, no ministers of the gospel, no offers of salvation; the day of grace shall have for ever fled; there will be no patron, no intercessor; the sweet, the clement, mediatorial hour, will have passed; there will be for guilt no plea, for pain no pause, no bound—inexorable all and all extreme. And when a man dies, is not this just the case with him? Is not his state as surely fixed as it will be at the Day

of Judgment? "If the tree fall toward the south or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth there it shall be." So man departs to heaven or hell, and is fixed in the state wherein he dies. Of what service are our places of worship and ordinances of religion, means of grace, preaching, exhortation, and prayer to the inhabitants of the invisible world?

To all intents and purposes, to every human being the day of death "is the day when the Son of man cometh."

Nearly two thousand years have rolled away since our Lord uttered these admonitory words; millions of human beings have gone to their eternal state, but do we know with any more certainty than they did, the day or the hour when the Son of man cometh? After all the searching investigations and the precautions taken by Life Assurance Societies, after all the preparations made by burial and sick clubs, have we any better knowledge as to when that event will take place, than the individuals to whom our Lord addressed this solemn caution? From no College of

Surgeons or Association of Physicians, however profoundly learned and extensively experienced, can we obtain more certain information than *they* possessed on this momentous subject? We know that in a very short time creation will be under the influence of stern winter; the trees and plants now covered with verdure will then lose their beautiful appearance, and be shrivelled up beneath his touch. We know also that winter shall in due time give place to spring, when nature shall be again arrayed in the garb of loveliness. But alas! we know not with equal certainty when any man shall die. Our friend may survive the rude blasts and piercing storms of winter; but spring,—that season which gives to all creation fresh vigor and activity, may prove his time of sickness and of death!

Should we wonder at the uncertainty of life; should we be surprised that death so soon overtakes some of our acquaintance? Rather should we not wonder that “a harp of so many thousand strings should keep in tune so long?” How delicate is the structure of the human

frame; how complicated the machinery which is incessantly at work! The heart dilates and contracts above sixty times every minute, and makes 100,000 strokes a day, without becoming weary. Twenty-five pounds of blood are driven through every part of the body by this pump every four minutes, while the vessels that convey it are often so minute and so thickly set together that you cannot pierce the skin with the finest needle without hitting one of these little channels. When we consider how exquisitely delicate and minute, and how vastly numerous are the vessels of the human frame, and that the bursting of one or the snapping of another may cause instant death, we may well exclaim,—

“Great God, on what a slender thread,
Hang everlasting things!”

When, therefore, life is so uncertain and the issues so momentous, how impressive is the caution, Watch! &c., &c.

On the 9th of November, in the same year (1842), in which he became Leader of a Band

on the Prayer-leaders' Plan, Mr. Liddle was appointed to the Leadership of a Society-class, at Booth Town. For this new duty he considered it right carefully and prayerfully to prepare as he had done in reference to his other offices, and by the introduction of the element of Biblical exposition, in relation to heart experience, the meetings were rendered deeply instructive and edifying, and consequently were numerous attended. The love entertained by the members towards their Leader under these circumstances was naturally grateful and sincere.

In the year 1845, Mr. Liddle entered into the service of Mr. Mewburn, now of Wykham Park, Oxfordshire, with whom six years earlier he had become acquainted, and laid the foundations of a friendship which was destined to strengthen with the progress of time. He often referred with deep gratification to the July of 1839—the period when that congenial friendship was commenced, as the date of one of the happiest circumstances of his life.

In 1848, our friend entered into the marriage relation with a lady whose Christian spirit was kindred to his own. The issue of this union was a son, in whose religious education the parents took the liveliest interest. The father, on the Sabbath afternoons alternate to those he attended the School, was accustomed, as the faculties of his son unfolded, to exercise them with suitable lessons upon the Bible and Catechism. To his latest day he reflected with pleasure upon the hours thus spent in developing the character of his interesting charge. He had the ineffable satisfaction to see that his solitudes and labors were not in vain in the Lord. It was my happiness to inform him when in his last illness, that his son, who had ever been strictly decorous, had become the subject of regenerating grace. The deep joy which this intelligence kindled in his soul was evinced in the beaming of his countenance while he devoutly expressed his thankfulness to God.

The Juvenile Missionary Society at Halifax, in addition to the interest it fostered in the

great cause of the world's salvation, served also to cement its members together in Christian love. It is worthy of grateful record that, in the fierce agitation which had severed about a thousand members from the "old body," in the Circuit, only *one* member of this association failed in the day of trial. Furthermore, the young men, thus associated, have since been the soul of every effort for the progress of the work of God, in connection with the Methodism of Halifax. Mr Liddle, who, as we have seen, was one of its original number, was in the year 1850 associated with Mr. Dyer, as one of its Secretaries, and in that capacity continued to serve the interests of the Society with consummate ability and zeal to the close of his pilgrimage.

About the period of this appointment our friend was also in charge of an important class in the Halifax Society, and from time to time filled various stewardships and offices of trust in connection with the Church, with cheerfulness, ability, and honor.

In a note, without date, found among his papers, but probably made at this stage of

his career, we have this interesting record :—

“This afternoon I am about to renew my covenant with God. O that the Spirit may enable me to make such sacrifices to Him as He can approve! May I be His entirely—body, soul, and spirit, and His constantly for ever! O enable me every moment to offer myself to Thee! Come, Lord Jesus, and take possession of my heart.

‘O happy day that fixed my choice
On Thee my Saviour and my God;
Well may my glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad.’”

Mr. Liddle was convinced of the relation subsisting between personal holiness and extensive usefulness, and was therefore much in prayer and constant in his attendance upon the means of grace; and so did his profiting appear to his brethren that they delighted to honor him. He was accordingly elected Superintendent of the School at Booth Town, in which he had commenced his labours as a teacher, and was gratified to see the scholars multiply and the institution in all respects to flourish. Subsequently he

filled the same post in the School at Halifax. In this capacity he was expected occasionally to address the scholars, and, as usual, made preparation for the duty. It is, happily, in our power to present the reader with one sample, which will doubtless be admired for its fine touches of nature as well as healthy moral sentiment.

SABBATH SCHOOL ADDRESS.

On a beautiful summer afternoon, when all nature seemed to droop under the powerful influence of a sun which had shone forth during the morning with unclouded brightness, the leaves seemingly courting the cooling breeze in vain, for no breath of air could be felt, nor leaf moved, and the birds had retired to the shade, and the cattle had left the open field to enjoy the luxury of the friendly shed or the covering of some spreading tree, I felt a desire to enjoy the retirement and pleasure which a walk in a country lane, at this season of the year, affords. Crossing two or three fields for the purpose,

I soon reached the lane. It was rather narrow, with a hedge and ditch on either side. The hedge had not been cut for many years, so that the topmost boughs met over head, and, intertwining with each other, formed a leafy canopy. A small stream crossed the lane with a bubbling cheerful noise, whilst here and there the busy gambolling minnow sported in her element.

After walking for a short time, I was suddenly aroused from my meditations by hearing a rustling in the hedge close by my side, accompanied by a low stifled moan. At first I was startled; but pausing for a moment I felt certain it was a sound of distress, and I attempted to ascertain the cause. On crossing to the place whence the sound came, I discovered a lamb entangled in a thicket of thorns and in such a position, that it must shortly have perished had not a friendly hand released it. It was almost strangled. Pulling out my knife I soon succeeded in cutting away from one side the thorns and brambles which held this poor creature fast, when its own weight caused

it to fall forward on the ground. After a struggle or two it rose to its feet and walked slowly away to join its companions who were standing at a little distance in stupid amazement. On looking round I found out the cause of its mishap. I discovered that the flock of sheep had broken out of the field in which they had been pastured, and crossing the lane, had taken advantage of an opening in the hedge to gain an entrance to this field. There was however, nothing desirable in the change as they had left a rich pasture for one that was very scanty. This poor lamb had been more eager than the rest, and in heedless haste had thus become entangled. As the little animal regained its companions the mute congratulations it seemed to receive and the gladness each appeared to feel, sufficiently recompensed me for my exertions.

As I resumed my walk I began to think that those wandering sheep much resembled the human family. I thought of our first parents, who, though placed in the richest pasture, yet, tempted by the thought of obtaining know-

ledge like God, wandered far from peace and happiness into the paths of sin and misery. This disposition has become natural to man in all intervening ages of the world to the present time. If we look around among our acquaintance can we not find many who have thus wandered? That bright-eyed girl, the mother's hope, the father's joy; that son or brother whose countenance beamed with intelligence and whose vivacity made him the centre of the domestic circle! Alas! how many such have become entangled in the thicket of sinful pleasures! Some have been rescued; but many have fallen and the clods of the valley have early covered blighted hopes, ruined prospects, and wasted unprofitable lives!

My young friends, just setting out on life's journey, listen to a word of counsel. Perhaps you have often heard this sentence, "The path of duty is the path of safety." You may possibly have smiled at it as old fashioned and strict; nevertheless there is a truth in it. As long as you walk through this world in the path of duty, trusting in Divine guidance and looking to the lamp of truth for light to your

uncertain footsteps you will never wander far away. You are quite safe if you walk in duty's path with such a Leader and such a chart. Make Jesus your Friend and Counsellor and you will never err. May your prayer constantly be—

“Lead me, Gentle Shepherd, lead me,
‘Till I reach fair Canaan's shore.”

About twelve years after her marriage, Mrs. Liddle became so seriously afflicted in her health that she was obliged to recline upon her sofa in a state of comparative helplessness, and after suffering thus for about a year, was removed into her bed where she lingered for two years longer. During the whole of this protracted illness her husband evinced an affectionate kindness and constant patience which were admirable in the highest degree. His untiring attention and sustained vigilance in this season of trial, were such as lastingly to impare the vigor of his constitution. But he had the reward of one who feels that he is ministering to a saint already within the

precincts of glory. As she approached her end, she curiously exclaimed, "O Josiah! what are those lights in the room?" "There are no lights love," was the response; upon which she sank back into a quiet contemplation for a few minutes, and then faintly said, "Josiah, I know now what the lights are." "They are the lights in the valley." This was in the month of August, 1863. In the course of a few hours she passed peacefully away, leaving no doubt upon the minds of survivors as to her triumphant entrance into heaven.

The religion which Mr. Liddle had cultivated for 30 years, sustained and consoled him under this severe bereavement. As ever, he found the public ordinances of Divine Service, eminently means of grace. It may truly be said of our dear friend that he loved the gates of Zion. Whenever the doors of the sanctuary were open, if he was in health, and otherwise in circumstances to attend, he was in his pew. And while there his attitude was decorous and devotional, as he realized the majesty of that gracious Being who has said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there

am I in the midst of them." He listened with a fixedness of attention that was admirable, drinking in every holy sentiment that issued from the pulpit. No wonder therefore that the ordinances of worship were to him seasons of spiritual refreshment.

After describing, in a letter to his sister, some of the points which struck him in a sermon he had heard, he proceeds to say :—

"I cannot find language to express how much I was blessed under the discourse. I think I have derived more benefit from the means of grace, since my last visit to Leeds than I ever did before; but then I can account for it. I have gone to the chapel more in the spirit of prayer—expecting the blessing of God; and I have not been disappointed."

On another occasion, after hearing a sermon on the Transfiguration of Christ, he writes :—

"O what a glorious subject this has been! If ever I was in raptures in the house of God it has been this evening."

In the earlier years of his Christian course it was Mr. Liddle's custom, in order to render permanently profitable to him the discourses to which he had listened, to write out at home what he had remembered of them. His memory, which was originally good, was strengthened by this practice. A considerable number of these Notes remain amongst his papers, from which we select the following as a specimen :—

CHRIST'S THRASHING FLOOR.

"WHOSE FAN IS IN HIS HAND, AND HE WILL THOROUGHLY FURGE HIS FLOOR, AND GATHER HIS WHEAT INTO THE GARNER; BUT HE WILL BURN UP THE CHAFF WITH UNQUENCHABLE FIRE."—*Matt.* iii. 12.

We shall direct attention to—

I. CHRIST'S THRASHING FLOOR.

1. *The floor represents the Church.*

The allusion is to the Jewish thrashing floor—a building covered at the top, and open at both ends, so as to admit of a current of air through it. By this the Baptist represents the Church of Christ.

On the floor are spread both wheat and chaff, promiscuously mixed.

2. *By the wheat we are to understand true Christians.*

They have the germ of piety in their hearts and the life of God in their souls. *Taste them*, and are they not savoury? When you approach them what a sweetness there is about them! How they exemplify the loveliness of true piety in their character! *Sow them*, they immediately germinate and take root. Plant half-a-dozen such grains of wheat in any village, and they immediately put their heads together to devise some plan of usefulness. They suffer not a week to pass e'er they begin to see if they can't establish a Sunday-school or distribute a few tracts. They commence a Prayer-meeting here, or a Class-meeting there, and set themselves about doing their neighbours good. *How they multiply!* One of these grains of wheat will thus produce thirty, another sixty, and a third, one hundred fold.

3. *But there is a different class on the floor, termed Chaff.*

These have a name to live but are dead ; they have the form of godliness but deny the power. They have heard of the Saviour, but have never plunged into the fountain. They may be industrious in their lives, moral in their character ; but they have never felt it to be an evil and a bitter thing to sin against God. They have very much the appearance of good wheat ; but they have never been converted. They have the ~~shell~~, but not the kernel ; they have shadow, but not the ~~substance~~ ; the carcase, but not the soul ; they are still in the sight of God mere chaff.

There are some on the floor who are not deceived themselves, but are endeavouring to deceive others. Perhaps they have connected themselves with the Church to get alms, or to get on in business. They steal the livery of heaven in which to serve the devil.

There are others on the floor who have been twice converted. They have first been converted into good wheat ; but, from want of watchfulness, have been converted back again into chaff. They have not been guilty of gross

immorality; but they have lost the life of God out of their souls. There is now no commerce between them and heaven; they are dry bones, rotten at the core; they are "clouds without water," "trees twice dead plucked up by the roots."

These are all chaff. When a puff of wind comes, see how they are all blown about up and down, poor whiffy whaffy things! Some are blown into the gin shop; others into the theatre. Sometimes, perhaps, when they go up to London where they think no one knows them, there they indulge themselves and give way to temptation. Thus are they blown up and down by every puff of wind that comes. They lack the *solidity* of good wheat. *Taste them*; are they not unsavory? They love to talk about anything but religion. You never hear them inquiring how the work of God is getting on. You never hear them asking if there are any accessions to the Society; if there are any in distress for their souls. They love to talk about the news of the week; about politics; about what is fresh in the newspapers, about anything but the things concerning the

Kingdom. *Sow them*; there they lie; they never take root. Collect all the chaff you can find and there it will remain a heap of useless stuff.

II. CHRIST'S FAN.

1. *It is the faithful ministry of the word.*

When the Jewish agriculturalist required wind to winnow his wheat he generated it by means of a fan. Whether the Roman army is here meant when 11,000,000 Jews perished in the destruction of Jerusalem, while the true members of the Church of Christ were preserved by escaping to a neighbouring town; we do not now inquire. Or whether Christ's accurate discernment of character—a discernment which searches the heart and tries the reins of the children of men; or His power to inflict punishment; or the operations of the Holy Spirit, we do not stop to notice. We take the figure in a more general sense to describe the word of God faithfully ministered. Is not my word, says Christ, like a fire, like a hammer, like a two-edged sword?

2. *There are few persons who like to be fanned.*

There was a young man who came to Christ

and kneeled to him, and appeared very humble and very desirous to know what he must do to inherit eternal life; but Christ fanned him about his riches and told him to sell all he had and become His disciple; but "he went away very sorrowful for he was very rich." John the Baptist preached before Herod, and for a time Herod heard him gladly; but when he began to fan him about his unlawful connection with his brother's wife, he could not stand it, and first he imprisoned John, and afterwards caused him to be beheaded because he happened to be pleased with the dancing of a young damsel. Paul also preached before Felix, and he for a time was greatly pleased, but, fan him Paul. As soon as Paul begins to reason of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, he says, "Go thy way, when I have a more convenient season I will send for thee." This is frequently done at the present day.

3. *Christ also fans by His Providence.*

He fans men by *prosperity*, and if they are chaff they are soon blown up and carried away; but if wheat they remember now from whom

all blessings flow. He fans them by *health*, and if they are chaff they forget God; but if wheat they are humble and grateful. He fans them by *persecution*; if they are chaff they are soon blown away, they can't stand the great hurricane; but if wheat they are decided, not counting life dear unto themselves. There is also *the last day*. That will be a general and a final fanning in the presence of the whole universe. It will be a fanning of all our thoughts, all our desires, all our words, all our actions. Our sins will all be proclaimed upon the house top. Christ *can* do it. The fan is in His hand and He can fan the people. He has a perfect knowledge of fanning character.

III. CHRIST'S DESIGN IN FANNING HIS FLOOR.

1. *That He may gather the wheat into His garner.*

2. *That He may burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*

When the world shall be burnt up one single grain of wheat shall not be lost, while those who die in their sins will be burnt up with unquenchable fire. There will be no

grandeur, no beauty, no music ; but weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. They will burn in a fire that illumines no darkness. The very tears they shed will only add fuel to the flame. They will be ever dying ; never dead.

From this subject let us learn.

1. The folly of those who will not come on to the floor of Christ's church because they see some chaff.

2. The folly of those who, congratulating themselves on worldly prosperity, shut themselves up in carnal security and never think of that day till it dawn upon them in all its solemnity, when the chaff shall be separated from the wheat, the wheat gathered into Christ's garner and the chaff burnt with unquenchable fire.

The absence of unusual incident in the life of Mr. Liddle may be explained by the fact that his course was singularly steady. Method, punctuality, correctness, characterised all his movements. I asked Mr. Mewburn if he was acquainted with anything remarkable in the

latter days of his friend's active life. His reply was, "No: there was nothing remarkable in him beyond his sterling uprightness and the steadiness of his principles and regularity of his walk. He reminded one of the Psalmist when he said, 'My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed!' So uniform were his habits that the cottagers knew the time by seeing him pass their doors as he moved from his residence to the office." Such was his unobtrusiveness that, with an elevation suitable to his intelligence and spirituality, the beautiful words of Gray may with propriety be applied to him :—

" Far from the maddening crowd's ignoble strife,
His sober wishes never learned to stray ;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life
He kept the noiseless tenor of his way."

A second time Mr. Liddle became happily married, and naturally calculated upon years of Christian fellowship with a lady of whose many excellencies it is needless here to discourse. But how uncertain are human calculations !

" Deep wrapt in error is the human mind,
And human bliss is ever insecure :
Know we what fortune yet remains behind ?
Know we how long the present will endure ? "

"Man *proposeth*, but God *disposeth*." In a very few weeks our friend was laid aside from active employment by a distressing affliction. A dropsical affection, disabling his lower extremities, and gradually encroaching upon the vital organs, forbad his reclining, so that for twenty-one weeks, night and day without intermission, he was obliged to sit erect in his chair. His sufferings were acute; but he was an admirable example of Christian patience and cheerful resignation to the will of his Heavenly Father. When his friends evinced sympathy with him his face would light up and his eye beam with intelligence, while he would remark that his sufferings were nothing to those of his Saviour. And, in conversation with Mr. Mewburn on one of these occasions, he said, "Never till now did I understand the blessed meaning of that expression of the Apostle, 'That we may be partakers of the fellowship of His sufferings.'"

At the expiration of the twenty-one weeks referred to, the medical gentleman in professional attendance, saw fit, by punctures to let the accumulated water flow off, upon

which he obtained so much relief as to be able to recline in bed. There he remained for twelve weeks more, and thence, on the 28th of September, 1866, in the 48th year of his age, passed away into those peaceful regions where sufferings are unknown.

Those whose privilege it was to visit him during his illness were filled with admiration of the holy joy in which his spirit was sustained. His mind was richly stored with passages of Scripture and sacred poetry, which he repeated with such judicious emphasis as to bring out the very soul of its meaning. In the years of his apprenticeship it was his custom to keep a small Hymn-book in his pocket, and in moments of leisure to commit stanzas to memory. The treasures thus collected were felt to be inestimable, in the seasons of weakness and pain. He prayed without ceasing, and at stated intervals throughout his illness, desired to be alone that he might freely use his voice in supplication. He had ever rejoiced in the Prayer-meetings of the Church, and now fre-

quently, notwithstanding the feeble state in which he was, longed for a Prayer-meeting in his chamber.

At one time Satan seemed to have been let loose upon him for a season, and as the deficiencies of his life rose up before him, he was in the deepest and most agonizing distress. To his friend Mr. Mewburn, he said, "It is dark with me, sir. It is the hour and power of darkness. I did think I enjoyed something of religion when I was engaged in the service of the Church ; but I am tempted to believe it was a delusion." In that dreary season which lasted for a few days, he was the very picture of distress. The ministers and others who visited him, dwelt upon the promises and the mercy of God and the perfection of the atonement, but he seemed to obtain little relief. At length, Mr. Mewburn put the great argument of the Gospel before him thus : "Did it ever occur to you that the Saviour when he suffered and died upon the cross had a full view of all your sins, and with a perfect fore-knowledge of everything, made the atonement ?" The spell was broken. "No, sir," was the reply, "I have not parti-

cularly noticed that. I feel relief already." Four hours after, at about two o'clock in the morning, the light of salvation opened upon him with a magnificent splendour; the merits of Christ came gloriously into view, and instantly he passed from deep gloom into royal transports. Thenceforward his spirit was jubilant; Christ became the sole theme of his conversation; the love he felt for his Saviour exceeded anything he had ever experienced, and this was connected with very profound views of the harmonies of His attributes, such as he had not previously conceived. He now expressed himself as feeling in relation to God like a little child guided by the hand of his father, willing to be led by him any where he might please; and so full was he of the love of Jesus that he frequently said, that heaven without Jesus could be no heaven to him.

Some time after this, Mr. Liddle felt so far respited from physical suffering as to flatter himself with the idea that he might, through the blessing of God upon the means employed, be again restored to health. Formerly he had never collected sufficient resolution to speak

of his personal experience in a Love-feast; but now he said, "Should it please God to raise me up I will go to the first Love-feast and publicly express the gratitude of my soul for his abounding goodness." He also resolved, in the event of a restoration to health, that he would so endeavour to arrange his business affairs as to have more time to devote to the immediate service of God. Such, however, was not his destiny. The relief from this severity of suffering was transient. He soon became rapidly worse, and waited for his release in dissolution full of immortal hope.

The following extract from a letter addressed to me by Mrs. Smith, of Leeds, the sister of Mr. Liddle, with whom he maintained the correspondence from which this Memoir is so much enriched, will be read with interest :—

"Having been prevented for some weeks, through personal illness, from seeing my brother, as soon as I was able I went over for the day. I found him in a very happy state of mind. He said, 'I am in the valley; but my Saviour is with me. He leads me step by step. I shall soon cross Jordan, but my

Saviour will be with me.' After this he rallied and we entertained hopes that he might be spared awhile longer. A fortnight before his death when I went over, I thought he could not live much longer; but being obliged to return home, I said I was sorry to leave him so poorly. He replied, 'You leave me better than you found me.' On the Saturday following I returned, and spent Sunday with him. In the afternoon while he was repeating some verses of our hymns he entered into the spirit of them so fully that I really thought he would have left us. In the evening about nine o'clock he threw out his hand, and took mine, looked at me and said, '*Good bye.*'"

With the exception of this touching farewell expression, his last utterances in audible tones were addressed to his friend Mr. Henry Edmunds, to whom, after a great effort, with an emphasis peculiarly his own, he repeated the words :—

" In suffering be Thy love my peace,
In weakness be Thy love my power,
And when the storms of life shall cease,
Jesus, in that important hour,—
In death as life, be Thou my Guide,
And save me who for me hast died."

His whispers after this became inaudible, and at length he swooned into the arms of his most blessed Jesus, but to revive responsive to the music of Paradise.

Throughout his severe and protracted sufferings his large-heartedness was conspicuous in the deep interest he continued to evince in hearing of the happiness of others, though he was now precluded from a personal participation. He was not soured or even saddened by affliction, as many otherwise excellent persons are, so as to feel disgusted with the innocent pleasures of life and speak of them with contempt. Upon the beauties of nature he delighted to expatiate as charming expressions of the graciousness of the Deity, notwithstanding the rebelliousness of men. He was an intelligent, loving and sincere disciple of Jesus; one whose heart beat in unison with all that is good and true. According to his ability also he was a munificent benefactor. His beneficence was systematic. His substance and his increase were tithed in the fear of the Lord. His love to the ministers of Christ

was great, and amongst the touching expressions of that love, it should be recorded, that upon his death-bed when visited by his former pastor, the Rev. Mr. Church, he placed in that gentleman's hand a £5 note, to be devoted to the fund for the support of the servants of God disabled by age and infirmity. In the untiring and most affectionate attention which he received from his beloved wife, of which it would be difficult to speak in terms of excessive eulogy, he had a recompense in kind for a similar devotion shewn by himself to his former partner. He was gratefully affected by this amiable fidelity, and touchingly said, "Poor girl! If it be possible, for me to watch over you I will." He is now amongst the "cloud of witnesses," with interest, at least observing, if not actually engaged in ministering to, those who are still running in the Christian race.

The largeness of the attendance at his burial and upon the occasion of his funeral sermon, evinced the estimation in which his character was held. This also was suitably expressed

by the Quarterly Meeting of the Circuit, in the following minute :—

“That this meeting gratefully appreciating the Christian character and faithful service of the late Mr. Josiah Liddle, who for many years adorned the doctrine of God his Saviour, and ably filled various important offices in connection with the Church of his early choice, and painfully alive to the loss which the Halifax circuit has sustained in his removal, records its devout thankfulness to God who enabled His servant to illustrate ‘the patience of the saints’ throughout a long and wearisome affliction, and blessed him with a peaceful end. And the members of this meeting respectfully offer to the widow and orphan of their departed Brother, the expression of their Christian sympathy.”

A graceful tribute was also paid by Mr. Dyer, with whom for the last 15 years of his life, our sainted friend, had been associated as joint Secretary of the “Juvenile Missionary Society,” in the report which that gentleman read at the Anniversary of the Society succeeding the event of his colleagues translation.

"This year it is our painful duty to record the death of our dear brother and most indefatigable Secretary, Mr. Josiah Liddle, who from the first day of the existence of this Society to the day of his death had its interests always at heart, and who, while God gave him health and strength, and even in failing health and in his sick chamber, served the great cause of Missions to the utmost of his ability."

Mr. Dyer also mentioned the fact that at the meeting of the committee after the removal of Mr. Liddle to the upper sanctuary, the members, in respect to the memory of their long-tried and much valued friend, elected his son as his successor in the secretariat.

Our brother is departed, but not dead. A good man never dies. His spirit, triumphing over the wreck of its organic vehicle, ascends to the bosom of its Lord. His holy influence also survives his obsequies, and multiplies with the onward roll of the ages. Had not our Saviour the immortality of influence in view, as well as the joys of the Paradisiacal

and Heavenly states of the soul's sublime career of promotions, when He said, "He that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die"? O let us make, and evermore repeat, the noble experiment; so shall we experience the amazing difference between existence and life, ensure a permanent influence upon earth, and claim a laurel whose freshness shall never fade.

"Wouldst thou from sorrow find a sweet relief?
Or is thy heart oppressed by woes untold?
Balm wouldst thou gather for corroding grief?
Pour blessings round thee like a shower of gold.
'Tis when the rose is wrapt in many a fold,
Close to its heart, the worm is wasting there
Its life and beauty; not, when all unrolled,
Leaf after leaf, its bosom rich and fair,
Breathes freely its perfumes throughout the ambient air.

Rouse to some work of high and holy love,
And thou an angel's happiness shall know;
Shall bless the earth; while in the world above,
The good begun by thee shall onward flow
In many a branching stream, and wider grow.
The seed that in these few and fleeting hours
Thy hands unsparing and unwearied sow,
Shall deck thy grave with amaranthine flowers,
And yield thee fruits divine, in heaven's immortal bowers."

Part ii.

BIBLE-CLASS NOTES.

“ Delightful task ! to rear the tender thought,
To teach the young idea how to shoot,
To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,
To breathe th' enlivening spirit, and to fix
The generous purpose in the glowing breast.’

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

ON THE

MANAGEMENT OF SABBATH-SCHOOLS.

OUR Sunday-schools are the source whence we should expect the principal supply, not only to meet the "wear and tear" of our Churches, arising from deaths, backslidings, and removals, but also to augment the numbers of our intelligent, active, and zealous members. And we are grateful for the extent to which these ends have been answered,—an extent far greater, perhaps, than those not accustomed to consider the statistical returns, would imagine. Yet it is deeply to be deplored that the regular increase of our membership bears a very slender proportion to the multitudes removing from the schools. It is a melancholy fact that scores of thousands annually pass through them to mingle with the wickedness of the world. Hence the problem respecting the best means of retaining

the elder scholars until they are transferred to the Churches, becomes a subject increasingly interesting to the thoughtful servants of Christ.

Amongst the numerous suggestions proposed to meet this case, those which respect to the improvement of Bible-classes deserve particular attention. For it is obvious that unless these are made interesting and instructive, young persons, having attained what we may term the age of waywardness, will not be held. But, assuming the teaching to be of a superior order, there is the best reason to expect a signal success, since, of all themes, the Biblical are incomparably the grandest, the most inspiring, and touch at all points, the deepest sympathies of our nature. Accordingly we find, as a matter of fact, that accessions to the churches from the schools are constant, in places where these classes are conducted with ability. It is therefore greatly to be deplored that the instances are many in which they are so clumsily worked that they are practically of little service.

Now this state of things does not arise from

the deficiency of teachers, *numerically* considered.

At intervals of five years there is a monster gathering of teachers and children in the spacious area of the "Piece Hall," in the town of Halifax, in "commemoration of the Sunday-school Jubilee." The seventh of these was held on Whit-Tuesday, May 22nd, 1866, when 29,000 teachers and scholars assembled, together with 500 instrumental and 350 vocal, musical performers, and probably about 10,000 spectators. The numbers of the teachers and scholars, respectively, of the 91 schools present on that occasion, were collected and published, and by striking the averages, in the gross, I find 1 teacher to every 5 scholars! Amongst the Congregationalists the average is 1 to $6\frac{1}{2}$; while in the various branches of Methodism, it is 1 to $4\frac{1}{2}$! And that these figures are tolerably correct may be sufficiently evident from the fact that the schedule returns of the 178 Wesleyan Sabbath-schools in the "Halifax and Bradford District" for the same year, give 7,267 teachers to 29,211 scholars. This is 1 teacher to less than 4 scholars!

For the sake of accuracy, before we proceed to reason upon these figures, it will be proper to make allowance for the "alternate-Sabbath" and "half-day" attendance of many of the teachers. In the "District" returns, already quoted, it appears that of the teachers registered in the books 3-8ths are present in the mornings, and 2-5ths in the afternoons. But as an offset against this, it must not be forgotten, the average morning attendance of scholars is little more than half, while in the afternoons it is 3-5ths. Thus in a school of 500, the staff of whose teachers, according to the gross averages of the "Jubilee commemoration" returns, would be 100, there would be present in the mornings 29 teachers and 260 scholars, or 1 teacher for every 10 scholars, and in the afternoons 40 teachers, and 300 scholars, or 1 teacher for every 8! Or if we take the proportions according to the averages of the Wesleyan "Halifax and Bradford District" schedule, then, in the mornings, we have 1 teacher to every 6 scholars, and in the afternoons, a fraction less than 1 to every 5!

The enormous disproportion evinced in these figures between the numbers of the teachers and scholars shews, that the general arrangement of our schools needs revision and reconstruction.

In the nature of the case a great proportion of so numerous a staff of teachers must consist of very inefficient persons. The results also prove this to be the case, else certainly we should not have to mourn over a defection so frightful as that which confronts us, of such multitudes passing from the schools into the abysses of vice. Accordingly when we inquire into the sources whence this host of teachers is raised, we find that the numbers are swollen by elder scholars prematurely drafted from the select classes. The plea of necessity is the defence for this. There are considerable numbers of small, junior classes for which teachers have to be found, and no other means of supplying this demand, is at hand.

But the action of this system is every way injurious :—

1. *It is injurious to the interests of the junior*

classes sought to be benefited. For, successfully to instruct young children, great experience, ability, and tact are required; and such qualities cannot be expected in the persons thus hastily put in charge. In the absence of these, time is consumed to little profit, and precious opportunities wasted of securely lodging healthy principles in the soft and susceptible heart.

2. *Injury is inflicted upon the youthful persons promoted to the Teacher's seat.* They are deprived of the advantages of instruction just at a time when best prepared to appreciate and profit by it. Further, though for the moment they may feel flattered by the promotion, yet, unless their hearts are in the work,—which is not generally to be presumed, the duty will become irksome, and they will withdraw from the school in disgust. For the very feeling of flattery with which they received the promotion will now induce them to imagine that to return to the seat of the scholar would be a degradation, and this their carnal minds may be too proud to brook. Let the places thus vacated be sup-

plied in the same way, and the same results will follow; so that here is the most effectual method of doing just what we wish to avoid, viz., banishing the elder scholars from the schools.

3. *The influence of this practice upon the Bible-classes is also most injurious.* While we maintain that efficiency in the Teacher is the element indispensable to the success of a Bible-class, it will be admitted that the element next in importance is the presence of the most inquisitive of the scholars. These stimulate the rest, and increase the interest of the lesson. If the more intelligent scholars are systematically drafted off, a Bible-class, however ably conducted, has not a fair chance of becoming what it ought to be.

4. If the efficacy of the select classes be enfeebled, *the tone and character of the whole school is depreciated*, and therefore, in proportion, it ceases to be what it frequently is termed, the "Nursery for the Church." This is immediately felt by the power of a sympathy which it is difficult to define, and must eventually deprive the school of many persons who

might become competent teachers. For, while the promotion of elder scholars before they are qualified to teach, must needs disgust them, and induce a distaste for teaching, which in after years, when the qualification is attained, they may never overcome, a different course will be attended with happier results. And other things being equal, teachers trained in the school, may be presumed to be most competent.

But, it will be demanded, if we allow the elder scholars to remain in the select classes until they become more thoroughly grounded in religious truth, and drink into the spirit of Christian love,—which all will admit to be most desirable, what is to become of the junior classes? The answer is that half-a-dozen or more of these should be united so as to form groups of about fifty, each of which, if properly ranged upon a gallery after the manner of our Day-schools, could be commanded by a single teacher. Or if the convenience of a gallery is not at hand, the children might be so ranked, upon forms, before the teacher that each should be fully

under the range of his eye. Thus the most competent teaching ability would be utilized to a much greater extent than at present, and the inferior, released, either to return to the classes or enter other fields of Christian usefulness. In a school registering 500 scholars, 300 may be presumed to be present ; of these 50 will be infants, who will be instructed by a single teacher as at present, leaving 250 to be disposed of. Of these 100 may be taken to receive instruction in select classes, which, averaging 33 members each, will employ three teachers. The remaining 150 may also be divided into three groups, and will, likewise, engage the attention of three teachers. Thus seven able persons, or double that number, allowing for "alternate Sabbath" and "half-day" attendance, will be sufficient to manage the whole school, whereas, according to the present system, 100 or 120 teachers are required.

The difficulty of keeping order amongst the children, cannot reasonably be urged as an objection to the gallery system. The command which an affectionate and experienced teacher has over the children, by the power of the eye,

must be acknowledged. Hence this objection is never urged by our Day-school teachers, nor by those estimable individuals who so skillfully manage the infants in our larger Sunday-schools. Those accustomed to visit these institutions will not fail to have observed how much more complete is the order in the Infant-school, where the gallery system is in practice, than in the small classes of eight or ten children who surround the teacher. In these, the boys at the sides are behind the teacher whenever he is particularly engaged with those on the opposite bench, and they infallibly avail themselves of the diversion of his eye, to assume grotesque attitudes, make noises with their feet, and bring their arms into mischievous play.

It may be urged that the development of this plan requires the convenience of a number of separate class-rooms, which, unfortunately, are not always available. Very well; if needs be, and the importance of the subject is sufficiently realized, every nerve will be strained to provide, as expeditiously as possible, such conveniences. But this objec-

tion is deprived of much of its formidable-ness by a fact, pressed upon my attention by Mr. Charles Watson, of Halifax,—a gentleman who had devoted much thoughtful consideration to the various questions relating to Sabbath-schools, and whose admirable system of ventilating, has done so much to maintain in crowded schools, the vitality of the atmospheric air. Mr. Watson assures me that in a large room several galleries may be simultaneously worked, and the mutual interference not be greater than that at present experienced in the classes. Mr. Drury, the very able teacher of the Halifax Wesleyan Day-school, decidedly states that the interference would not be nearly so great. Whoever doubts on this point may satisfy himself by visiting a Day-school, when he will at once perceive that the gallery is far the quietest and most orderly part of the school.

But the better to confine attention,—“that faculty of all others,” as De Gerando justly observes, “which indicates the existence and activity of the human understanding; and upon which all success in study depends,” a system

of moveable partitions or curtains might be readily contrived.

Three capital advantages are now secured.

1st. We have improved the constituency of the select classes by the restoration of their more advanced members.

2nd. We have improved the quality of the teaching throughout the schools, by employing exclusively the most accomplished teachers, and to the utmost, utilising their talents.

3rd. We have benefited the Church in other departments of her holy enterprise, by releasing for her service a number of workers formerly needlessly monopolised in the schools.

In the distribution of religious tracts, the visitation of the sick, the visitation of absentees from the schools, and in various other services, there is ample scope for the talents, the zeal, and enterprise of all who may be disengaged from the work of formally imparting religious instruction to the young.

The question of the supply of able and zealous teachers, may now come under consideration.

By starting this inquiry we would not be construed to insinuate that such teachers are not at present to be found in our schools. We have them, thank God, and in respectable numbers too. It has been my happiness, occasionally to visit Sunday-schools in different parts of the kingdom, and I have great pleasure in saying, that in many instances, I have found Bible-class teachers who thoroughly understood the importance of their work. But there can be no offence in desiring that as these are removed to other spheres of Christian labour, or translated to Paradise, their places should be occupied by others no less intelligent and devoted. Neither can there be any offence in desiring that the ranks of such workers should be considerably strengthened.

Are there not, then, in our congregations, educated persons who do little more for the cause of God than contribute money when cases of necessity are pressed upon their sympathies, whose responsibility, not only as the stewards of wealth, but also with respect to personal and social influence, mental acqui-

tions and leisure, might be urged upon them? Might they not be impressed with the fact that by absenting themselves from the post of duty in the select class, that post is left to be occupied, as best it may, often by individuals whose principal qualification is that which these persons need,—willingness to work. Surely such arguments will sway the more spiritual of this class, who are therefore the best qualified for the undertaking. Of the less spiritual there is little hope unless in the revival of piety. Persons accustomed to luxurious homes will not sacrifice their enjoyments unless by a spiritual sensibility they can appreciate the richer luxuries of blessing humanity and extending the triumphs of the Gospel.

We are well aware that intellectual cultivation combined with social advantages, even when graced by religion, are not everything necessary to constitute an efficient teacher; there must also be a peculiar aptitude for the work. Where this does not exist in the genius of an individual, it may yet be acquired, and the more readily by those whose education is superior. By their special training and exten-

sive experience our day-school teachers are eminently qualified to impart useful hints to those who may require them. Some of these, though purely mechanical, will be found of great importance, such as standing from the gallery at the apex of an angle of 45° that the eye may readily survey it from end to end; and then letting the eye so travel over it that every child may feel that he is under observation. There are also a number of little points, familiarity with which enables a teacher to quicken attention, and sustain interest in the communication of the lesson, which our practised Day-school teachers would cheerfully explain. In inaugurating the system we now propose, a few practical lessons from our Day-school teachers, — lessons imparted by them to the children in the presence of those who are afterwards to prosecute the good work, would prove of very great advantage.

Whoever engages in the work of a Bible-class teacher should be deeply impressed with the importance of carefully preparing the lessons at home.

In a person generally well informed, it would be presumption to appear at the head of a class without having previously considered his theme; much more so in one whose information is limited. But it is to be feared this presumption is common, and consequently that the "sterile, dry-bone teacher" so admirably described in the following extract, is by no means a *rara avis*. "The sterile, dry-bone teachers are quite innocent of wandering from the lesson. They stick to the text like a bad swimmer to his corks. Thus, after a child has read, 'Jesus went up into the mountain to pray,' the questions would be as follows: 'Who went up into the mountain? Where did Jesus go? What did Jesus go there to do?' This is far from an exaggerated specimen of dry-bone questioning, leaving all important points, all deductions, all mental exercises, and often all religious knowledge on the shelf." The questions proposed are frequently such as cannot but appear trifling to the scholars, and render them impatient to be retained for an hour or longer in submission to monotonies. Common-place individuals who neglect the

stores of industry, talent, and genius, cannot present, even the sublimest truths, with that freshness which is calculated to strike the admiration, rivet the attention, rouse the conscience, and break and melt the heart. The blessing of God, indeed, can render the feeblest instrument most effective, and without it the most accomplished agent is worse than useless; but this cannot be reasonably expected where diligence and devotion are neglected.

It would be of great advantage if preparatory classes for teachers could be conducted weekly by the ministers, or when impracticable to them, by some approved individual, with whom they could go through the lesson for the Sabbath ensuing. But these should be so managed as not to supersede, but rather to necessitate or at least encourage previous study on the part of the teachers. This might be ensured if outlines of Lessons, somewhat after the plan of those presented in this volume, were required to be written by each person, and handed in to the President of the class to be examined and compared by him, and that he might offer such suggestions upon them as

would tend to their being rendered practically efficient. Selections from these papers might also to advantage be arranged for publication in the pages of the "Sunday School Magazine," or in any other convenient form.

It is scarcely necessary to add that to render this provision useful to the highest degree, the lessons should be the same throughout the classes of the school. Mimpriss's "Harmony of the Gospels" will ever be found a capital text-book and guide. It is of the greatest importance that children should become intimately acquainted with the history of Christ, that they may have just ideas of the great plan of salvation, and of the brilliant example they have to imitate. The time in which they have to remain in the schools is so brief that it should be mainly occupied with these glorious themes. And since the rays of revelation streaming in from all ages converge in Christ, the skilful illustration of the evangelical history will include a general acquaintance with the whole Bible. Teachers not accustomed to study the lessons at their homes may tire of "going through Mim-

priss repeatedly," but it will be otherwise with those who furnish their minds from the many excellent works which throw light upon the Gospels. We do not insist that the Evangelists should evermore be made the foundation of the lessons of the Sabbath-school; but when other portions of Scripture are substituted the selections should be made with special reference to practicalness. There can be little profit in making certain chapters in the Chronicles, consisting of proper names and enumerations, the subject of an hour's talk,—an indiscretion which I have repeatedly witnessed. Such portions have their value, as the Philologist, the Chronologist, and the Historian will testify, but they are utterly unsuited to the classes of the Sunday-school.

It remains for me to offer a word of explanation in reference to the lessons to which the reader is now to be introduced, which are eminently calculated to benefit that very useful order of Christian laborers of which their Author was so distinguished an ornament.

It will be seen that Mr. Liddle proceeded

upon the basis of Mimpriss ; and the "Notes" and "Scripture Illustrations" to which he occasionally refers are those in the "Treasury," of that author. He did not, however, by any means confine himself to that excellent work, but culled from all available sources, and introduced much that appears original, occasionally differing from the interpretations of his favourite Author.

Should the example presented in these admirable Notes encourage those who sustain to the rising generation the important relation of Bible-class Teacher, to equip themselves before-hand for their work, so as to improve the quality of their teaching, the beneficial results must be incalculable.

J. A. M.

LESSONS.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

Matt. xvii. 1-21; Mark ix. 2-29; Luke ix. 28-42.

Observe the conclusion of the preceding Lesson.

After six (or eight) days.—Six clear days or eight days inclusive of those upon which the events respectively took place.

The persons taken.—The Law required two or three witnesses.—Deut. xix. 15; Mark v. 37.

The Mountain.—Mark ix. 30.

After what exercise?—"While he was praying."

The fashion of his countenance was altered.
—He no longer wore the form of a servant, but appeared in the form of God.—Phil. ii. 6, 7.

His face did shine as the sun.

His raiment white as lightning and glistening.—Matt. xxviii. 3; Rev. xix. 8, 14; John i. 14; 2 Pet. i. 16-18; Rev. i. 16; Matt. xiii. 43.

White as the light—White as snow.—How beautifully white is snow! Light is whiter than snow. The seven colors of light are violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red. “So as no fuller on earth can white them.” See note. [*Mimpriss.*]

Moses and Elias.—The two witnesses.—Mal. iv. 4-6. Moses fasted forty days and nights at the giving of the Law; Elias on his journey to Horeb; so also Christ in the Wilderness. Moses was buried by God; Elias was translated. Moses face shone. Exod. xxxiv. 29. See Scripture Illustrations.

The Subject of their Conversation.—Moses and Elias were deeply interested in the death of Christ. They had faith in the Messiah which was to come; we must have faith in the Messiah who has already appeared.

Peter fancied, no doubt, that Christ was now assuming his proper dignity, and that the kingdom was at length begun, and in the hurry of his thoughts, he would make three tabernacles for the heavenly visitants. The disciples lodging with their Master. Tabernacles—Tents.

A Voice came out the cloud.—Probably like thunder, such however, as they had not heard before. See the effect on people.—Gen. xv. 12; Isa. vi. 5; Ezek. ii. 1; Dan. x. 8; Rev. i. 17. Human nature could not support it and the Disciples remained thus 'till Christ touched them.

Reasons for the Transfiguration:—

1st. *To prevent the Disciples from being offended at the depth of affliction into which they were soon to see their Master plunged.*

2. *To arm them for, and encourage them under their own sufferings, by its demonstration of a future state, and a display of its felicities.*

Here they see Moses who died and was buried (Deu. xxxiv. 5.) alive, and in a state of glory. This was a demonstration of the immortality of the soul; for his body had not been raised; Christ was the first-fruits in this respect.—1 Cor. xv, 20-23; Acts xxvi. 23; Col. i. 18; Rev. i. 5. Here also they see Elijah who had not died, but who had been translated—who had not been “unclothed but clothed upon.”—2 Cor. v. 4. Here therefore,

the two-fold state of the righteous was presented, first, as to the soul, and then as to body and soul.

3. *To shew the superiority of Christ over Moses and Elias.*

- (1.) As Teacher.
- (2.) As Lawgiver.
- (3.) As Mediator.

HYPOCRISY AND COVETOUSNESS.

Luke xii.

Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees.—Hypocrisy is the affecting to be what we are not.

Leaven of yeast.

- 1. May exist without, at once, being known.
- 2. Is insinuating and will soon pervade the whole mass.
- 3. Makes bread appear more bulky than it really is.

So hypocrisy.

Nothing covered, &c.—Christ's disciples are to have no secrets amongst themselves

that they need fear being known by all the world.

Be not afraid of them that kill the body.—Prov. xxix. 25. Fear of man, &c. We must not through this fear, profess to be what we are not; neither act as hypocrites by concealing our profession.

Divide the inheritance.—Amongst the Jews the eldest child had twice as much as any other.

Who made me a judge?—"Christ came to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom and to offer Himself a sacrifice for sins, and not to interfere with the Magistrates office."

Covetousness.—"Inordinate desire to have more and more; unlawful desire to gain riches beyond what is necessary for our wants. It is a violation of the Tenth Commandment; and is expressly called Idolatry.—Col. iii. 5."

The covetous shall not inherit the kingdom of God.—1 Cor. vi. 10.

It occasions an erring from the faith.—1 Tim. vi. 10.

Love of money is the root of all evil.

Examples.—Judas—Baron de Vidil.

A man's life, &c.—We cannot keep ourselves alive by anything we have; but are dependent upon God.—Ecc. ii. 4 and 11; and 10 and 17.

Sell all that ye have and give alms.—Meaning of the word “alms.”—Matt. xix. 21; Acts ii. 45; iv. 34, 35.

Bags which wax not old.—Meaning of the expression.—Hag. i. 6, alluding to the danger of losing money out of a hole worn in an old purse attached to the girdle. Such is frequently the gain of the world, and so are its treasurers!

THE COST OF A RELIGIOUS PROFESSION.

Luke xiv. 25—33.

If any man come to me and hate not, &c.—Hatred here denotes simply that one thing is preferred less than another.

Father, &c.—Mentioned because as matters then stood, a profession of Christ's religion was apt to set a man at variance with his nearest relations.—Matt. x. 34.

Examples.

Paul—See Phil. iii. 7, 8 ; Acts xx. 24.

See also Rev. xii. 11 ; xx. 4.

Matthew at the receipt of custom.—Luke v. 27, 28.

The Disciples.—Matt. xix. 27.

Case of the rich young man.—Matt. xix. 16.

Relate the anecdote about the poor man on the coast of Malabar.

For which of you, &c.—Religion is a work of soberness, of calm and fixed purpose, and no man can properly enter on it who does not resolve by God's grace to fulfil all His requirements, and make it the business of life.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

Luke xv. 11—32.

The Younger of them said.—Thought himself quite capable of managing his own affairs. See the root of all sin, a desire of disposing of ourselves and of being independent of God.

Not many days after, &c.—A desire to be

away from the restraints of home and of a father's eye. Thus sinners desire to get away from God—They desire not the knowledge of God. They want to get Him out of their thoughts. They are lovers of pleasure more than God, and employ the time God has entrusted them with to His dishonor, **and not to His Glory.**

Wasted his substance. — “Wilful waste makes woeful want.”

When he had spent all, &c.—In that state of heart and life which is far from God, though the sinner may for awhile revel in the intoxication of sinful pleasures, yet ere long he will find a mighty famine—an extreme want of every thing to make him happy.

He went and joined himself.—Finding no help nor relief nor shelter from his former associates, and not willing to brook the mortification of returning home in such circumstances, he went still further into the country that was far from his father's house. Thus sinners, by wandering far from God into the ways of vice and misery, join themselves to Satan and his servants and are employed in fattening the devil's swine!

And he would fain have filled, &c.—Thus sinners would fain satisfy themselves with carnal pleasures and worldly comforts—those husks which the swine eat, but the endeavour is vain and fruitless. The world cannot satisfy the soul of man.

When he came to himself.—The mad intoxication of sensual pleasure dethrones and extinguishes reason. How often, when men are accused of crimes, do they excuse themselves by saying, "They were drunk; they did not know what they were doing." So all who wander from God and try to satisfy their immortal souls with earthly things, whether riches, honors or pleasures, worldly pursuits—carnal gratifications, may really be said to be, not in their right minds; for they act like persons deprived of reason. Sinners will not come to Christ until they see themselves ready to perish.

And he arose, &c.—He did not wait until he got better clothes; but set off just as he was,—bare-footed and in rags.

When he was a great way off, &c.—God is ready to meet those who come to Him. His

eyes are continually fixed on those who go astray from Him, and He is continually looking to see if they will return.

Father I have sinned.—Those who have received the pardon of sin—must ever feel in their hearts a sincere sorrow for them, and be ready to make a penitent confession.

The father said to his servants.—The Prodigal returned home between hope and fear—fear of being rejected, hope of being received ; but his father was not only better than his fears but better than his hopes. For rags, he was not only clothed but adorned. Barefoot, he received shoes. Faint and hungry, he was not only fed but feasted. Thus, for true penitents, who cast themselves on His mercy in Christ, does God exceedingly above what they could have dared to ask or think. He clothes them with the robe of righteousness ; sends His Spirit into their hearts to witness to their adoption, and they are not only fed with the bread of life, but feasted with the rich consolations of the Gospel.

The conversion of a soul to God, is the raising of that soul from death to life, and

the finding of that which seemed lost. It is a great, wonderful, and happy change. It is like that which passes on the face of earth when Spring returns.

And they began to be merry.—Merry, here God does not mean levity, but solid, serious, religious, heartfelt joy—Christian cheerfulness.

THE UNJUST STEWARD.

Luke xvi. 1-18.

A steward.—One who is put in trust. We are all stewards.—1 Pet. iv. 10.

Give an account, &c.—Rom. xiv. 12; Luke xii. 42; 1 Cor. iv. 2; 1 Pet. iv. 5.

“A charge to keep I have,” &c.

What shall I do?—He had been very prodigal and had made no provision for the future. How should he support himself? He could not dig, and was ashamed to beg, though not ashamed to cheat!

I am resolved what to do.—A lucky thought entered into his head. He was not yet turned

out of office, so while he had the power he would use it to make friends who would succour him in the time of need.

And the lord commended, &c. — Properly his master commended neither the actor nor the action, but only the provident care about his future interest, which is worthy of our imitation with regard to the important concerns of another life.

For the children of this world. — “Who have their portion in this life.” — Psa. xvii. 14.

Are wiser, &c. — Not absolutely; for they are all egregious fools, and must ever be thought so by those who believe there is a life to come—a life of unspeakable happiness or misery. But what is meant here is, that they more steadily pursue their own ends with respect to this present life than the children of God do with respect to the life to come. The latter seldom appear so thoughtful and active in the great concerns of religion as worldly men do in the pursuit of the momentary and precarious possessions of the world.

Children of light. — Those who walk by the

light of Divine truth.—Eph. v. 8; 1 Thes. v. 5-8.

Make to yourselves friends &c.—"Mammon" means riches or money. Make friends by doing all the good you can with it, particularly to the children of God.

That when ye fail.—When your flesh and heart fail, &c.

The parable is intended to teach those who are living for another world, to be active and prudent in their schemes for the life to come as children of this world are for the present, and particularly to do good to others to the extent of our ability. God and Mammon.—See Note. [*Mimpriss.*]

And the Pharisees also, &c.—Covetous.

Derided—Isa. liii. 3; Heb. xii. 3.

"Hail Galilean king," &c.

Justify yourselves.—You think yourselves righteous and want others to think you so.—Luke. x. 29; xviii. 11.

God knoweth your hearts.—Psa. vii. 9; Jer. xvii. 10; John ii. 25. His eye pierces through every covering, and He judges not according to appearances; consequently many

men and things, held in the highest estimation by our fellows are abomination in His sight

Esteemed amongst men,—Psa. xlix. 6 :
xiii. 18.

Abomination in the sight of God,—Prov.
xvi. 5.

Every one presseth into it,—Every one that enters forces his way by breaking through the love of temporal concerns and sensual pleasures.—Matt. xi. 12, 13.

The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence.—
We must use violence

- (1.) To ourselves.
- (2.) To the world.
- (3.) To Satan, and
- (4.) To heaven.

Easier for heaven and earth to pass, &c.—
Isa. xl. 8 ; li. 6 ; 1 Pet. i. 25.

Whosoever putteth away his wife, &c.—
Herod, in whose dominions Jesus now was (Luke xiii. 31), had put away his own wife, and married the wife of his brother Philip, on account of reproving which, John the Baptist had been put to death. Mark vi. 17, 29.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

Luke xvi. 19-31.

A certain rich man,—Very probably a Pharisee and one that had justified himself before men — a very honest as well as honorable gentleman.

Clothed in purple, &c, — And doubtless esteemed on this account, not only by tradesmen, but by most who knew him, as encouraging trade, and acting according to his rank and station.

Fared sumptuously,—Enjoying himself in expensive luxury day by day — taking care not only to gratify his vanity by the finery and delicacy of his dress, but his palate also, by the most exquisite meats. He fared splendidly. His tables were loaded with the richest dainties; the most delicate wines delighted his taste. Who so blessed as he? For every day the delight returned—every day presented a new scene of bliss.

Lazarus,—(Greek,) *Eliazer*, (Hebrew,) signifies "The help of God," and was a name very

properly applied to one who was poor and afflicted, and had no help but what came from Heaven.

Laid at his gate full of sores,—He was so diseased and infirm that he could not go himself to the rich man's gate, but was carried by some compassionate person and laid there. See Acts iii. 2. He was so naked that his sores lay exposed to the weather, and so poor that he desired to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. See Job ii. 7, 8.

Some have supposed this rich man to have been a sinner guilty of all the crimes that can blacken humanity—a glutton and a drunkard, rapacious and unjust, cruel and hard-hearted, one who spent in intemperance what he had acquired by extortion and fraud. Now this is very wrong, for the parable is not intended to tell us that a monster of wickedness—one who has devoted the whole of his life to the service of Satan, shall be punished; but that a man who, though not chargeable with doing much ill, has done no good—who, careless about the situation of others, lives only to

please himself, shall not escape punishment. It is intended to shew the danger of living in the neglect of duties and particularly of considering the gifts of Providence as our own property and not as a trust from our Creator, to be employed in His service. It is not said that the rich man abused Lazarus,—forbad him his gate, or did him any harm; but it is intimated that he slighted him—was under no concern for him—took no care about him. A little thing done for him would have been considered a great kindness, and yet the rich man took no notice of his case—did not order him to be taken in and lodged in his barn or one of his out-buildings, but let him lie there. Observe, it is not sufficient not to oppress and trample on the poor; we shall be found unfaithful stewards of our Lord's goods in the great day, if we do not succour and relieve them.

In this manner did Lazarus—a child of God and an heir of heaven, lie at this rich man's gate,—drag out an afflicted life,—pining away with hunger and cold and painful disease; while the great man within,

though a child of wrath and an heir of hell, spent every day in the highest luxury of dress and table;—the former, according to the opinion of the world, being a remarkable instance of the greatest misery, and the other, of the most consummate felicity.

The beggar died,—Worn out with hunger, pain, and want of all things.

Abraham's bosom,—The entertainments of heaven are described as a splendid banquet or feast with Abraham and the other Patriarchs. Matt. viii. 11; Luke xxii. 30. Explain "lay in his bosom."—John xiii. 23.

The rich man died,—For death knocks with equal boldness at the mansion of the rich and at the cottage of the poor. Psa. xlix. 6, 15.

And was buried,—We hear nothing of the funeral of Lazarus. This is one of the advantages the rich have over the poor. They can have a splendid funeral. Their clay-cold corpse may be enclosed in a coffin covered with velvet. Many mourners may assume a melancholy aspect. The horses may be decked with nodding plumes. But what is all this pomp to the soul, which, the moment it leaves

the body, enters upon an eternal scene of bliss or woe? How great the difference in these respects between the rich man and Lazarus! To the former, death was a terrible thing; but to the latter, it was welcomed with inexpressible joy. From the moment of their departure, how completely were all things respecting them reversed.

In hell,—The state of separate spirits. Both,—the rich man and the poor man, were in the same place, but in different regions, separated from each other by the impassable gulf. We are here taught with certainty that the souls of the righteous immediately after death are in joy and happiness, while those of the wicked are in torment and misery. These states respectively will be much intensified at the general resurrection.

And seeth Abraham afar off,—And yet knew him at that distance. And shall not the righteous know each other when they are together in heaven?

He cried, Father Abraham,—Job v. 1. We have here an instance of praying to saints; but with what success?

Remember that thou, &c,—Job xxi. 13 ;
Psa. lxxiii. 12, 19.

Observe, it is not merely being in a state of poverty and affliction on the one hand, or of wealth and ease on the other that causes the difference in the future conditions of man ; but the right or wrong use of either state.

* * Two characters are mentioned in this chapter, viz, the “Rich Man” and the “Steward.”

The relation which the latter bore to the former.

The accusation made.

Is it right for a person to waste the property of another ?

OFFENCES AND FORGIVENESS.

Luke xvii. 1-6.

It is impossible,—By reason of—The general corruption of human nature—The temptations of Satan—The snares of the world. It cannot be but one way or other, offences will be given and taken. Stumbling-blocks will be laid in the way of such as are travelling to the

heavenly Jerusalem, and many will stumble and fall—many will be hindered and turned out of the way.

But wee unto him, &c.—Let me warn you therefore, as you love your souls, to guard against the guilt and danger of being stumbling-blocks in the way of others.

It were better, &c.—Better die by the hand of violence, and suffer the most shocking execution.

Take heed,—That ye neither offend nor be offended.

Seven times,—Psa. cxix. 164; Prov. xxiv. 16.

Forgive him.—Col. iii. 13.

Increase our faith.—The natural disposition of the corrupt heart is revengeful. Faith is a mighty principle.

As a grain of mustard-seed—Matt. xvii. 20; Mark xi. 20; 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

PRAAYER.

Luke xviii. 1-8.

Always to pray—Luke xxi. 36; Acts vi. 4; x. 2; Rom. xii. 12; Eph. vi. 18; Phil. iv. 6; Col. iv. 2; 1 Thes. v. 17.

A parable,—This is one of contrast. The

Unjust Judge is opposed to the God of faithfulness and truth. The Widow to the Bride—the Church, for which Christ laid down His life. The unjust judge wished to get rid of the widow; but God does not thus; rather He desires to have us in His house, and make us most blessed for ever.

What is prayer?

Is prayer necessary?

We must either pray or perish.

Men of prayer.

What is it to faint?

The character of the judge.—A judge is one who should exercise justice and judgment.

Widow.—Special promises for widows — Exod. xxii. 22; Psa. lxviii. 5; Mal. iii. 5.

She had lost her natural protector and was at the mercy of her adversaries, so she came to the judge to have justice done her.

THE DANGER OF RICHES.

Matt. xix. 16-30; Mark x. 17-31; Luke xviii. 18—30.

There came one running and kneeling.—
Many of the poor had followed Jesus from

the beginning; one rich man came at last, and came running with great earnestness, and kneeled to Him with great humility and reverence.

What good thing, &c?—By this question he manifested.

1. His belief in a future state.
2. His concern to obtain its advantages.—In this he differed from many rich and young.
3. His belief that something must be done.
4. His belief that he was willing to take those steps and comply with those conditions necessary.

How did the young man expect to obtain eternal life? Salvation is not by works; it is of grace through faith.

In order that this young man might be perfect he must “sell all and give to the poor.” Who was it that for our sakes became poor?—“Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,” &c.

He went away sorrowful.—Not being willing to have Salvation at so high a price.

For he had great possessions.—He was not only rich in the things of this life, but fancied

himself rich also in spiritual things.—Rev. iii. 17, 18. In supposing that he had really kept the commandments, however, he had deceived himself. For had he known God his Redeemer and loved Him supremely as required by the FIRST TABLE of the law, he would have willingly parted with all for His sake. And had he loved his neighbour as himself as required by the SECOND TABLE he would have wished the poor to have a sufficiency rather than that he should have had “great possessions.” He did not possess that one good thing of which the Apostle speaks, Phil. iii. 7-10. It is only in Christ that men can be rich to eternal life. 2 Cor. viii. 9.

Then said Jesus unto His disciples,—Namely, while they had this example before their eyes, and were witnesses of the melancholy fact of a well educated and well disposed young man, relinquishing all hopes of eternal life rather than part with his temporal possessions;—giving up all prospect of everlasting riches and glory in heaven for the uncertain transitory enjoyments of earth.

How hardly, &c,—Why is it a hard thing

for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God ?
Because riches have a bad influence upon
piety,—

1. In the acquisition.—For not to mention
the many frauds and other sins which are
often committed to obtain them, they occasion
endless cares and anxieties, and draw the
affections away from God.

2. In the possession.—Because if they are
hoarded they never fail to beget covetousness
which is the root of all evil ; and if they are
enjoyed then they become strong temptations to
luxury, drunkenness, lust, pride and idleness.

3. It is difficult to possess them and not
love them inordinately, to trust in them
rather than in God, and to look upon them
as a source of happiness.

With the poor it is otherwise. They are
exposed to manifold afflictions, and labour
under the pressure of continual wants which
serve to convince them of the vanity of the
world and the necessity of putting their trust
in God—Wherefore in the common nature
of things the poor are nearer the Kingdom
of God than the rich.

4. It is not easy to possess riches and not think highly of ourselves on account of them, because they certainly give their possessors some consequence which otherwise they would not have, and cause them to be looked up to with respect by others.

But the most difficult thing of all is to possess them and make a right use of them, not as owners but as stewards, remembering that the Great Lord will call us some day to give an account of our stewardship.

How hardly shall they that trust in riches,
&c.—Psa. xlix. 6, 11, 12, 16, 20.

A Camel.—Proverbial expression meaning a difficulty. See Note. [Mimpriss.]

When His disciples heard it they were exceedingly amazed.—They had followed their Master in the expectation of becoming rich and great, and were astonished to hear Him declare that it was next to impossible for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. They thought, if the rich and great cannot enter His Kingdom He could never have any Kingdom,—and therefore asked with great surprise—

Who then can be saved?—If rich men,

with all their advantages cannot, who can? A poor man! A peasant! A beggar! "Ten thousand of such," says Mr. Wesley, "sooner than one rich man."

SUFFERING AND TRIUMPH.

Matt. xx. 17-28; Mark x. 32-45; Luke xviii. 31-34.

And they were in the way, &c.—Going up to the feast at Jerusalem—John vii. 8, 10; xi. 55.

He went before them.—Their Leader, &c, Matt. xvi. 24.

And they were amazed.—Why?

They were afraid.—Why were they afraid?

He took again the twelve disciples apart, &c.—This is the sixth time that He foretold His sufferings—John ii. 19-21; Matt. xvi. 21; xvii. 12; 22, 23; Luke xvii. 25. He had before said that He should suffer many things; now He specifies the things. In general He says, as in Luke, "All things that are written

by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished." As in Psalm xxii. 1-18; Isaiah liii; Dan. ix. 26; Mic. v. 1; Zec. xiii. 7. He then mentions seven things.

1. **Betrayed**—By whom? To whom? Psa. xli. 9; John xiii. 18.

2. **Condemned to death.**—

3. **Delivered to the Gentiles.**—Acts iii. 13; iv. 25-28.

4. **Mocked**—As if he were a fool.—Psa. xxii. 7, 8; Isa. liii. 3.

5. **Scourged.**—As if He were a Knave.—Isa. lix. 6; liii. 5.

6. **Spit upon.**—To shew their abhorrence.

7. **Crucified.**—As a criminal slave.—Acts x. 39; 1 Peter ii. 24; Gal. iii. 13.

They understood none of these things.—They could not reconcile what Christ said with their preconceived notions of the Messiah.—Luke xxiv. 25; John xii. 16.

The mother of Zebedee's Children.—Salome. Compare Matt. xxvii. 56, with Mark xv. 40.

James and John.—They with Peter had been the most privileged of the disciples.—Luke viii. 51; Mark xiii. 3; xiv. 32, 33;

Luke ix. 28. James and John were partners with Simon Peter.—Luke v. 8-10.

Right hand.—A place of dignity.—1 Kings ii. 19; Psalm xlv. 9; xc. 1; 1 Kings, xxii. 19.

Know not what ye ask.—Not aware what is implied in being advanced in my Kingdom. All who share in it must first share in my sufferings. Are ye able and willing to do this? "Through much tribulation," &c.—Acts xiv. 22; Rom. viii. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12; 2 Cor. 1. 24; Rev. vi. 9-11.

Cup—*What is the meaning of the word?*

1. In the common acceptation it is a vessel to drink out of. Gen. xl. 13.

2. It is figuratively used in Scripture to denote a man's portion whether of good or evil, in this world. It was formerly the custom at entertainments for the governor of the feast to portion out to each guest, the kind and quantity of wine he was to drink, the refusal of which was considered a breach of good manners. Psa. xi. 6; lxxiii. 10; Isa. li. 17, 22; Rev. xiv. 10; xvi. 19; Psa. xvi. 5; xxii. 5.

3. It is further used figuratively to denote

the enticements and blandishments used to deceive. Rev. xvii. 4.

4. The "cup of devils" is idolatry. 1 Cor. x. 21.

5. A "bitter cup" signifies wrath, torment, or suffering. The punishment of death was formerly inflicted by making criminals drink a cup of hemlock juice or other poison. Hence Psal. lxxv. 8. And Christ is said to have *tasted death* for every man.

6. There is also a "cup of blessing." 1 Cor. x. 16; and the "cup of salvation." Psal. cxvi. 13.

The cup of which Christ had to drink was exceeding bitter.—Matt xxvi. 38, 39, 42, 44.

Baptism.—A rite in which water is used as the outward sign. Acts viii. 36; x. 47. In the Psalms trials and affections are represented by overwhelming waters: xviii. 16; lxix. 1, 2; lxxxviii. 7; xlii. 7. See also Luke xii. 50.

Ye shall indeed drink of my cup.—James was the first to suffer martyrdom for Christ. Acts xii. 2. John was scourged by the Jews. Acts v. 40. He was afterwards banished to the Isle of Patmos; and speaks of himself as a "companion in tribulation." Rev. i. 9.

Not mine to give.—Not as an act of

sovereignty merely or favouritism. The highest honors of His kingdom were not then to be disposed of by Him to gratify the worldly ambition of any one. He does possess the power to place at His right hand; but He can only exert it according to the principles of righteousness—according to the will of His Father. Luke xxii. 29; John x. 28; Rev. iii. 21.

Prepared of my Father.—"Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people." John xiv. 1-3; Matt. xxv. 34; Heb. xi. 16; Rom. ii. 6, 7.

When the ten heard it, &c.—No doubt they overheard the conversation.

They were moved with indignation.—They were not only equally desirous, but considered themselves equally deserving of the principal posts, and they took it exceedingly amiss that Zebedee's sons should have been so arrogant, presumptuous, and self-conceited, and, it seems, they expressed their resentment. What spirit did this manifest? Was it the spirit of humility?—of each esteeming the other better

than himself? Luke xxii. 24; Prov. xiii. 10; Phil. ii. 3; Jas. iv. 1-3.

Jesus called them unto him.—In order to cure their pride, He told them that His kingdom was not like the kingdoms of this world; and that the greatness of His disciples was not like that of the princes of earth, which consisted in reigning over others. The several governments both in the East and West in our Lord's time tyrannized and exercised despotic power over the people. See the manner of a king described.—1 Sam. viii. 5—18.

It shall not be so among you.—Matt. xviii. 1-4; xxiii. 11, 12; John xiii. 13-17; Rom. xii. 10, 16; Jas. iii. 1; 1 Pet. v. 3-5; 2 Cor. i. 24.

Whosoever would be great — whosoever would be chief. — The greatness of Christ's disciples was to consist in doing all the good they could by a continued course of humble, laborious service in imitation of their Divine Master, whose greatness consisted not in being ministered to by men, but in ministering to them as a servant, in healing the sick, feeding the hungry, instructing the ignorant and laying

down His life a ransom for the sins of many.
Phil. ii. 5-7; Acts, x. 38.

“Servant of all to toil for man,
Thou didst not, Lord, refuse,” &c.

A ransom for many.—2 Cor. v. 21; Gal. iii.
13, 14; Eph. i. 7; Tit. ii. 14; Rev. v. 9; 1 Tim.
ii. 6; Heb. ix. 28.

THE BLIND MAN AT JERICHO.

Luke xviii. 35—43.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF JERICHO.

Perhaps the largest city of ancient Canaan.
From six to seven miles West of the Jordan,
and near the point where that river enters
the Dead Sea.

HISTORICAL NOTICE.

Moses had a sight of it from the top of
Pisgah. Deut. xxxiv. 1-4. Was first taken
by Joshua who razed it to the ground, and
denounced a severe curse upon the person
who should rebuild it—Jos. vi. 24-26. This
curse was literally fulfilled in the days of

Ahab, 550 years after, upon Hiel, the Bethelita.—1 Kings, xvi. 34. It was here that Achan stole the Babylonish garment and wedge of gold.

Was the destruction of Jericho brought about by ordinary or by supernatural means?

What made the walls fall? Faith!

A certain blind man, &c. Diseases of the eyes have always been very common in the East, and still are so, insomuch that travellers are astonished at their prevalence. Various causes are assigned, such as fine dust and particles of salt in the atmosphere, the custom of sleeping on the roofs of houses, exposed to the night air, injurious winds, and the light of the moon.

Blindness is a terrible calamity. How much of the happiness of life consists in being able to see! With the organ of vision we behold all that is lovely, beautiful, and pleasant. The wise man says that "the eye is not satisfied with seeing." Eccl. i. 8. It never says it has had enough. How much knowledge and instruction comes in at the eye! What a sad thing then to live in constant darkness!

"Truly light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun."

But there is a blindness far worse than that of the body. There is the blindness of the mind—the soul blind to all spiritual things.

One of the purposes for which Christ came into the world was to give eye-sight to the blind. "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

ZACCHÆUS AND HIS ROYAL GUEST.

Luke xix. 2—27.

JESUS was now on His way from the other side Jordan to Bethany, near Jerusalem, to which place He hastened with a view to be there eight or ten days before the Passover, intending to preach and work miracles in the most public manner, under the eye of all the people and the great men, of whose resentment He was no longer afraid, since His ministry had now continued the appointed time, and He was to die at this Passover.

Zacchæus.—This name means “pure,” or “righteous,” or “to make clean.”

What was the profession of Zacchæus?

What position did he hold in his profession?

What was his condition?

He was a publican.—Publicans were collectors of taxes for the Roman government—an office generally undertaken by those who did not care much about the opinion entertained of them by their fellow-countrymen, who felt it degrading to be under a foreign yoke. These publicans or tax-gatherers were often very oppressive and hard in their dealings with the people, and they frequently availed themselves of the opportunities they had to enrich themselves by exacting more than they ought.

He sought to see Jesus.—What was it that prompted him? The things he had heard had made such a deep impression on his mind.

He could not.—There were two obstacles—

1. The Crowd.

2. His Stature.

The Passover being near at hand, the roads to Jerusalem were full of people, many of

whom falling in with Jesus, chose to travel in His company that they might see His miracles. But "where there's a will there's a way," and Zacchæus overcame the obstacles by running before, and climbing up into a sycamore-tree, and this notwithstanding that he was rich!

Zacchæus, it seems, was in Jericho when Jesus passed through that city, though his house was further on the road.

And when Jesus came to the place, &c.—Zacchæus came to look upon Christ and to take particular notice of him, but little thought of Christ looking upon him. Observe how Christ "prevented him with the blessings of goodness," and out-did his expectations. See how He encourages weak beginnings and helps them forward. He that desires to know Christ shall be known of Him. Jesus had never seen him before, yet He called him by his name, and showed that He knew his house was a little further on.

He added and spake a parable, &c.—Two reasons appear why Christ spake this parable.

1. "Because He was nigh unto Jerusalem"—the royal city.

2. "Because they thought the kingdom of God should immediately appear." The expectation was universal. See Note. So after His resurrection.—Acts i. 6. The Apostle Paul had to warn the Thessalonians on this point.—2 Thess. ii. 1-3. But by Peter we are instructed that in the last days the danger will be in the opposite direction.—2 Pet. iii. 3, 4.

A certain nobleman.—A man of noble birth, or a king's son.

Went into a far country.—There is an allusion here to a custom which prevailed greatly in our Lord's time among the princes of the East, who, before they ventured to ascend the throne, &c.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS.

Matt. xxv. 31—46.

[It is much to be regretted that the Manuscript of this admirable Lesson is incomplete; the introductory part, seemingly, being irrecoverably lost.]

II. THE MULTITUDES WHO SHALL BE JUDGED.

Who shall be gathered before Him?—All of every age from the beginning of time to its end. The young and the old—the good and the wicked from every land. Not one will be absent. There will be no mere spectators. All nations will be gathered at the tribunal of the Judge, that every one may receive according to the things he has done.

When all nations shall be so gathered before Him, what will the Son of Man do?

In what manner will He separate them?—Matt. xiii. 40, 41, 47-50. He shall separate them according to their different characters, which He perfectly knows, with as much ease “as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats” which may be mingled with them. The metaphor is taken from the shepherds of ancient times, who kept the sheep and goats in different flocks, and hastily separated them when they became mingled together. Sheep have ever been considered as the emblems of mildness, simplicity, patience, and usefulness, and here represent the genuine disciples of Christ. Goats are naturally quarrel-

some, lascivious, and excessively ill-scented, and were considered as the symbols of riotous, profane, and impure men. They represent here all who have lived and died in their sins.

Where will He place the sheep?—In token of His favour to them and of the further honors He intends to bestow upon them; the “right hand” being the place of honor.

Where will He place the goats?—To intimate His displeasure against them and their final removal from amongst His people; nor shall the haughtiest and mightiest sinner be able to resist that appointment by which he is placed in this situation. Numerous as the persons to be judged may be, all will be ranged under two classes. People now greatly differ in character. Some are worse than others. There are the moral and amiable so far as outward deportment goes, who do not love Christ; and there are the proud, the passionate, and the immoral of every degree; many who think they have never done harm to anybody, and many who have been pests to all about them. All will be present at this awful judgment, each to be dealt with according to his deserts.

The classification will be brief and complete. They who have loved the Saviour will be on His right hand, and they who have not loved Him will be on the left. There will be no mistake, no omission. The wicked and the godly in this world dwell together in the same kingdoms, cities, churches, families, and are not, with certainty, always distinguishable one from the other, such are the infirmities of saints, such the hypocrisies of sinners, and one event frequently happening to both. But in that day they will be separated and parted for ever. For the Lord both knows them that are His and them that are not, and He can and will separate them. The separation will be so exact, that the most obscure saints shall not be lost in the crowd of sinners, nor the most plausible sinner hid in the crowd of saints; but every one shall go to "his own place."

III. THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE JUDGMENT.

What shall the KING say to those on His right hand?

Where shall those be to whom He will address these words?

*Of whom are they blessed ?
 What are they to inherit ?
 For whom was this kingdom prepared ?
 When was it prepared for them ?
 Who is it that shall address these words ?
 In the 31st verse what does Christ call
 Himself ?*

Now He changes the appellatives and takes the title of King, which He does with great propriety where He speaks of Himself as exercising the highest act of kingly power, in passing the final sentence on all men as His subjects, whereby their state shall be unalterably fixed for ever.—John xviii. 36, 37.

Come ye blessed, &c.—Christ had gone to prepare a place for them; now he has come to receive them unto Himself.—John xiv. 2, 3. The Father had declared those “blessed” who put their trust in the Son.—Psa. ii. 12.

*How many characters had Christ pronounced
 “Blessed” in His sermon on the Mount ? EIGHT.*

1. The poor in spirit.
2. They that mourn.
3. The meek.

4. They who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

5. The merciful.

6. The pure in heart.

7. The peace-makers.

8. They that are persecuted for righteousness sake.—Hymn 676 ; also 304.

St. James pronounces another character blessed, viz., the man that endureth temptation.—Jas. i. 12.

Inherit the kingdom.—As the children and heirs of God by adoption. It is only a child that can be said to *inherit* anything. An inheritance cannot be obtained as the reward of service, or be purchased with money. It can only come to a person by virtue of his filial relation. The child only is the heir of his father's property.—Rev. xxi. 7 ; also Rom. viii. 14-17. *

* [The statement that "It is only a child that can *inherit*," may be thought open to challenge, since, in default of lineal descendants, collateral relations have ever been esteemed as heirs. They are so esteemed, however, as legal *representatives of the child* ; and hence when an inheritance passes from a son to his uncle it is still said to *descend*.]

Prepared for you, &c.—Purchased by my own blood for you. Christ, as our kinsman after the flesh, has redeemed, brought back the inheritance for His people. The present state of good men is at best but a melancholy banishment from their native country; an exile in which they are frequently exposed to manifold temptations, to persecutions, to poverty, to reproach, and to innumerable other evils. But, that they may bear all with unwearied patience, courage, and constancy, they are given to know by this sentence that they are beloved and blessed of God as His own dear children, and that there is no less than an eternal kingdom prepared for them, even from the foundation of the world, and that they are the undoubted heirs of this kingdom.

In what condition did our Lord say He was placed, and how did those on His right hand behave towards Him?

How many characteristic marks of that condition are here? SIX, viz. :—

1. I was an hungred.—Isa. lviii. 7.
2. I was thirsty.—Matt. x. 42.
3. I was a stranger.—Heb. xiii. 2. Alluding

to the case of Abraham and Lot.—Gen. xviii. 2-5; xix. 1-3.

4. Naked.—Jas. ii. 15, 16.

5. Sick.—Jas. i. 27.

6. In prison.—2 Tim. i. 16; Heb. xiii. 3.

All the works of outward mercy here mentioned suppose faith and love as their source, and must needs be accompanied by works of spiritual mercy, such as instructing the ignorant, alarming the careless, encouraging the disconsolate, comforting the distressed, strengthening the weak, confirming the wavering, reclaiming the wicked, and edifying the righteous. But works of this kind could not be mentioned by the Judge in the same manner. He could not say "I was ignorant and you instructed me; I was in error and you recalled me to truth; I was in sin and you brought me to repentance." But how astonishing is it to hear the Great Judge declaring that all the good offices which men have ever performed, supposing they performed them in obedience to His will and with a single eye to His glory, were done to Him! "That you may know how acceptable

such acts of kindness and charity are to me, I assure you that I reckon every thing of this kind as done to myself. It was I who was an hungred," &c., &c.

What answer shall the righteous make ?

When saw we thee an hungred and fed thee ?—It was He that had fed them.—John vi. 48 ; 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3.

Gave thee drink ?—He had quenched their thirst with living water.

Took thee in ?—It was He that had sheltered them.—Eph. ii. 18, 19.

Clothed thee ?—He had clothed them in His own perfect righteousness.—Phil. iii. 9-12 ; Rev. xix. 8.

Came unto thee ?—He, the Good Physician, visited them in their low and lost estate and gave His life for them.—Rom. v. 6, 8.

We learn from this that neither the righteous nor the wicked have the same estimation of their conduct and works which the Judge hath.

What shall the King say ?—See how condescending is the regard of Christ to His followers. He will own them, even the poorest,

the youngest among them, as brethren.—Heb. ii. 11. And He takes kindness done to them as done to Himself.—Matt. x. 40-42; Heb. vi. 10. These things will not be taken to merit the honour and blessedness bestowed at the day of judgment. All will be free—the gift of Christ's grace only. But the things referred to will be brought out as proofs that those placed at His right hand do love Him, and are prepared to dwell with Him in everlasting bliss.

In like manner the character of those at the left hand will be brought out as the ground of the shame and misery to which they will be condemned. They will not love Christ. They did not care for His followers. The whole charge against them resolves itself into *omission*. They were selfish—taken up with their own ease; took no thought of Christ's suffering, poor, and oppressed followers.—Prov. xxiv. 11, 12.

What shall the King say to those on His right hand? In this account of our Lord's proceedings at this awful time, the acquittal of the righteous is represented as taking place before

the condemnation of the wicked. This may be to shew that God takes greater delight in rewarding than in punishing.

Depart—from whom?—In this world they were often called to come to Christ, to come for life and rest; but they turned a deaf ear to His calls; justly therefore are they now bid to depart from Him to whom they would not come. Depart from Me, the fountain of all good; from Me, the Saviour, and therefore, from all hope of salvation. “I will never have anything more to say to you or do with you.” But if they must depart from Christ, might they not be dismissed with a blessing?—with one kind and compassionate word at least? No!

What term does the King apply to them?

Ye cursed.—They who would not come to Him to inherit a blessing must depart under the burden of a curse,—the curse of the Law due to every one that breaks it; the curse of the Gospel due to every one that disobeys it. Observe: Christ calls the righteous “blessed of His Father,” for their blessedness is owing purely to the grace of God; but the wicked

are called "ye cursed," because their damnation is owing entirely to themselves.

Into what are they to depart ?

For whom was this prepared ?

This declaration of our Lord, when compared with verse 34, seems intended to teach us that God's original design was to make men happy, and that their becoming miserable is the effect of their own voluntary iniquity and perverseness in rejecting the counsel of God against themselves. No sooner was man created than a state of consummate felicity was formed for him and his posterity. But the fire of hell was "prepared for the devil and his angels," viz., after their fall ; and because wicked men partake with devils in their sin and rebellion against God, they are doomed to share with them in their punishment. Perhaps also the fire of hell is here said to be prepared for the devil and his angels, to shew the greatness of the misery to which sinners dying in sin shall be consigned. The punishment which they shall suffer will be of the heaviest kind, being the punishment of devils.

In what condition did our Lord say He was

placed; and how did they behave towards Him in that condition?

What answer shall they give to the Judge?

What will be the reply of the King?

IV. THE IRREVOCABLE DECISIONS OF THE JUDGMENT.

Where shall the wicked go?

Everlasting punishment.—This is what the original word means; not destruction or annihilation, as some would understand it.—Isa. lxvi. 24; 2 Thes. i. 9.

The Saviour represents Himself as uttering sentence upon the two classes before Him; and that sentence will be carried into immediate effect. The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment. The punishment of the foolish virgins, of the slothful servant, and of the cursed, was not because of their personal crimes, but because they were not good, and were not useful in the world. Their lives do not appear to have been stained with crimes, but they were not adorned with virtues. They were sent to hell because they did no good. If these harmless people are sent to perdition, what must be the end of the wicked and profligate?

Where shall the righteous go?—Rom. ii. 6, 7.

Their condition after the judgment will be one of unending blessedness. They will dwell with Christ; they will be like Him; they will enjoy everlasting fellowship with Him. Death will never enter the world to which they go, nor sickness, nor pain. — Rev. vii. 15-17. They will be “ever with the Lord.”—1 Thes. iv. 17. If the meaning of this short sentence were fully understood and duly considered, what an impression it would make upon the minds of men! “Everlasting punishment!” “Eternal life!” The season of heaven is an eternal summer—a summer unsucceeded by winter; that of hell an eternal winter—a winter followed by no summer. Endless light—light unsucceeded by darkness; is the day of heaven; endless darkness—darkness unsucceeded by the dawn of morning, is the night of hell. Eternal mid-day is the hour of heaven—its sun never declines; eternal midnight is the hour of hell,—its clock will never strike one.

THE APPROACH OF THE PASSOVER.

Matt. xxvi. 1—5; 14—16; Matt. xiv. 1, 2, 10,
11; Luke xxii. 1—6.

And it came to pass, &c.—What sayings had Jesus finished?

Where was He when He had finished these sayings?—On the Mount of Olives.—See Matt. xxiv. 1-3.

What did Jesus now say to them?

What did they know?—So it would seem that the preceding discourses had been delivered on Tuesday.

What was to be celebrated after two days?—Feast of Passover.

Called also?—Feast of Unleavened Bread.

How many principal feasts were there?—

THREE:—

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Feast of Passover. | } Deut. xvi. 1-17. |
| 2. Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost. | |
| 3. Feast of Tabernacles. | |

But the greatest was the Feast of the Passover. It was called the "Passover," because it was kept in memory of the Lord's having

passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, sparing their firstborn, when He destroyed the firstborn of the Egyptians. It was called also the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because during the seven days of its continuance the Israelites were strictly forbidden to eat leavened bread or even to have any leaven in their houses.—Exod. xii. 15-20. It was held in commemoration of their hasty flight out of Egypt. It began on the 14th day of the month Abib, afterwards called Nisan, at even, and continued until the 21st day of the month at even. The directions given by God Himself, for its first celebration and perpetual observance, are recorded—Exod. xii. 1-27, and 43-49. The manner in which it was celebrated throws much light on several circumstances which follow. The master of the family began the feast with a cup of wine, which, having solemnly blessed, he divided amongst the guests.—Luke xxii. 17. Then the supper began with unleavened bread and bitter herbs; which, when they had all tasted, one of the young persons present (according to Ex. xii. 26), asked the reason of the solemnity.

This introduced "*the shewing forth*," or declaration of it; in allusion to which we read of "shewing forth" the Lord's death, 1 Cor xi. 26. Then the master rose up before the lamb was tasted. After supper, he took a thin loaf or cake which he broke and divided to all at the table; and likewise the cup, usually called the "Cup of Thanksgiving," of which he drank first, and then all the guests. It was this bread and this cup which our Lord consecrated to be a standing Memorial of His death.

What was to happen to the Son of Man?
 Betrayed.—Delivered up.

JUDAS'S COVENANT WITH THE CHIEF PRIESTS.

Who assembled together?

How many classes?

The chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people.—They together constituted the Sanhedrim, or Great Council, which had the supreme authority both in civil and

ecclesiastical affairs. This Council consisted of 70 members.

The "Chief Priests" were not such as had been high priests, but the chief men among the priests, probably the Presidents of the 24 classes into which the priesthood was divided.

By the "Scribes," we understand those who had care of the Law. It was their duty to make copies of it; to expound its difficulties and teach its doctrines. They were keepers of the records, consulting lawyers, authorized expounders of holy writ, and finally, school-masters.

By the "Elders," we are probably to understand select men of the people,—persons whose rank and standing, led to their being raised to this distinction.

In the Council the office of President belonged to the High Priest.

The assembly, when convened, sat in the form of a semi-circle or half-moon, the President occupying the centre. At each extremity stood a Scribe, whose duty it was to record the sentence pronounced by the council. The meetings of this council were usually held in

the morning. Their place of meeting was a hall close by the great gate of the temple. In cases of urgency the Sanhedrim might be convened in the house or palace of the high priest. So it was in this case.

Where did they assemble?

What was the high priest's name?—He was the son-in-law of Annas, who had formerly been high priest, and who still possessed great influence and control in sacerdotal matters.

What were they going to deliberate about?

In what manner did they want to take Jesus? and for what purpose?—Privately, by some artifice, without giving an alarm to his friends. Psa. ii. 2; xxii. 16; Acts iv. 5-7, 25-27; v. 17-28.

It would seem that Caiaphas was a Sadducee.

The Kings of Judah appointed the high priests from among the family who possessed the claim to that office. Under the Syro-Macedonians and Romans, those nations assumed the same privilege, but with greater license. About two years after our Lord's

crucifixion, Caiaphas and Pilate were both deposed by Vitellius, then Governor of Syria, and afterwards Emperor. Caiaphas, unable to bear this disgrace and the stings of his conscience for the murder of Christ, killed himself. This was about the year 35 of the Christian era.

When did they agree that it would not be proper to take Jesus ?

Why not on the feast-day ?

With what sentiments did they regard the people ?

This was the result of human wisdom ; but when Judas came they changed their purpose. So the council of God took place and the true Pascal Lamb was offered up on the great day of the pascal solemnity. At this feast all the males of the children of Israel had to be present in Jerusalem, and therefore they thought it would not be safe to take Jesus and kill Him on the feast-day, lest, if they seized Him openly, a tumult should be raised among them either to rescue Him out of their hands or to avenge His death.

Who entered into Judas ?

Satan.—The Adversary or Opposer. He is also called "The Devil," the "Dragon" the "Evil one." (Relate about the preacher discoursing concerning the devil.) He is further styled the "Angel of the bottomless pit," the "Prince of this world," the "Prince of the power of the air," the "god of this world," "Apollyon," "Abaddon," "Belial," "Beelzebub." "Satan," and "Devil," are the names by which he is the more frequently distinguished; the former being applied to him about forty times, the latter about fifty times. The antagonism of Satan and his Kingdom to Christ and His Kingdom, runs through the whole of the New Testament. The agency of Satan extends to all that he does or causes to be done.

To this agency there are the following restrictions :—

1. It is limited by the power of God. Satan cannot go beyond the power on which he is dependent for existence.
2. It is limited by the finiteness of his own faculties. Devils are created things.
3. It is limited by the established connection of cause and effect, or the laws of nature.

The miracles Satan has been supposed to possess the power of working are called "*lying signs*" and "*wonders*,"—2. Thes. ii. 9.

Under these restrictions, "the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about."

Then his agency is both moral and physical.

1. *Moral*.—He beguiled our first parents, and thus brought sin and death upon them and their posterity. He moved David to number the people. He resisted Joshua, the High Priest. He tempted Jesus. He entered into Judas, to induce him to betray his Master. He instigated Ananias and Sapphira to lie to the Holy Ghost. He hindered Paul and Barnabas on their way to the Thessalonians. He is the "spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience;" and he "deceiveth the whole world."

2. *Physical*.—His agency is directed against the bodies of men as well as against their souls. That the agency of Satan was concerned in producing bodily diseases, the Bible plainly teaches. Peter says of Christ that "He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil."

Then entered Satan into Judas.—He is never wanting to assist those whose heads are bent upon mischief. He stirred up his corruptions and covetousness, and put it into his heart to betray.

What does the Catechism say in answer to the question, "How does Satan prompt men to sin?"

What was Judas's surname?

Amongst what number was he?

Twelve—*what?*

This is a circumstance of such high aggravation that each of the Evangelists has mentioned it.

Which way did Judas go?—"There is a way that seemeth good unto a man, but the end thereof is death." So it was with Judas.

What to do?

What was the object he had in view?—He went from Christ and His company to the house of Caiaphas, the high priest, whom he knew to be a most inveterate enemy to his Master, and having found means of introducing himself, and communicating his design, he communed or conversed with the Chief Priests and Caiaphas, called "Captains of the temple," Luke xxii. 52.

•

They were Jewish officers who presided over the guards, which kept watch every night in the temple. The result of their communing is not mentioned ; only by the sequel it appears that he informed the priests of the place where his Master used to spend the nights, and undertook to conduct a band of armed men thither, who, in the absence of the multitude, might easily take Him. And because none of them were so well acquainted with Jesus, as to be able to distinguish Him from His disciples in the darkness of the night, he agreed to point Him out to them by kissing Him.

What proposition did Judas make to them ?

What will ye give me, &c.—I will undertake to put Him in your hands at a time and place in which you may effectually secure Him, without the danger of giving any alarm to the people.

What did they promise to do ?

What covenant did they enter into with Judas ?

What does "covenant" mean ?—They bargained with him.

For how much ?

Thirty pieces of silver.—Each piece being supposed to be worth 2s. 6d, the total sum would be £3 15s. This was the price of a slave. See Exod. xxi. 32, See also Zach. xi. 12, 13. Joseph was sold for twenty pieces of silver. Gen. xxxvii. 26-28. So vilely was He esteemed who shed His precious blood for man, and so true is it that “He took upon Himself the form of a servant!” The sum was so trifling that it would be unaccountable that he should have been influenced in any degree by it to betray to death his Friend and Master had it not been that Satan at this time entered into him, which doubtless, he was permitted to do to punish him for giving way to a worldly covetous spirit and probably for other sins, and especially his not improving the great privilege he had enjoyed for about three years, in statedly attending upon Christ’s ministry—hearing all His divine discourses, and being a constant spectator of His holy life and astonishing miracles, and having the high honour of being called to be one of His apostles.

What did Judas do from that time ?

What to do ?

In what manner did Judas want to betray Christ?

In the absence of whom?—He wanted to place Christ in their hands in as private a manner as possible. In the absence of the multitude, that knowing nothing of what was done they might not raise a tumult and rescue Him out of the hands of those that seized Him.

Judas being disappointed of the prey he hoped to have got from the sale of the precious ointment, sold his Master to make up the sum.

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